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HANS OF ICELAND;

OR,

THE DEMON OF THE NORTH.

A ROMANCE,

BY

VICTOR HUGO,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, BY

J. T. H.

New-York :

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PREFACE.

ONE of the ancient historians of Norway, alluding to the period at which the events hereinafter recorded were supposed to have taken place, says : "It was the current belief of the inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic at that day, that there existed certain beings in those regions who, though born of woman, owed their paternity to fiends from hell. They were supposed to roam about the earth, fulfilling their mission of evil, by inflicting the direst calamities upon all who fell into their power. Murder and rapine followed in their footsteps ; but fearful above all things, was the fate of the woman who, through violence or seduction, became the victim of one of these unclean and malignant spirits. United irrevocably to the monster for life, it was held that she became a partaker of his awful doom throughout eternity."

One of the most dreaded of these incarnations of the evil one, was Hans of Iceland—whose name is still the terror of the nursery, and whose deeds are still the theme of story and of song. To collect the traditions concerning this strange being, and to combine them with the remarkable events which accompanied the close of his career, seems to have been the purpose of the author in compiling the following work.

B.

HANS OF ICELAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEAD-HOUSE OF DRONTHEIM.

"POOR Guth Sterson! there she lies, like a sea-star left on the beach by the tide. So much for gadding about and falling in love, instead of staying at home and mending her father's nets. But what will the poor fisherman do, neighbor Neil? St. Joseph the fisherman comfort him in his bereavement!"

"Yes!" struck in an old woman, in a shrill cracked voice—"yes; and there is her lover, stiff and dead, beside her. That, too, came of falling in love. It was for Guth's sake that Gill Stadt went to work in those dangerous mines at Pöeras. If he had remained with his mother, and aided her to take care of his little brother, he never would have been crushed to death by the fall of the rocks."

"His brother, Mother Olly?" observed neighbor Neil, interrupting her. "You forget, Gill has no brother; the widow's house is left to her desolate; and that is what makes the loss of this young man so much the more distressing."

"She is truly to be pitied," replied the old woman; "but for him, I could almost find it in my heart to say it served him right. What business had he to go to them horrid mines at all?"

"The devil take the mines, I say!" exclaimed Neil; "I verily believe all the copper got out of them costs us at the rate of a man a pound. What say you, friend Braal?"

"I say all miners are fools," replied the fisherman; "their occupation is unnatural. A fish cannot live out of water. What business has a man in the bowels of the earth?"

"But," remarked a young man, "there

is money to be made in mining. Gill needed money to get married, and so he betook himself to the quickest means of procuring what he wanted."

"Yes!" cried old Olly; "and instead of getting money he got his neck broke. A fine wedding party he has brought his sweetheart to after all; has he not?"

"So this poor girl drowned herself for grief at his loss, did she?" asked one of the bystanders, with an air of curiosity.

"Who says so?" cried a soldier, pushing through the crowd. "It is no such thing. I knew this girl well enough; she was betrothed to the miner as you say; but, for all that, she was the mistress of one of my comrades; how much she cared for her dead lover, you may judge, when I tell you that the very night she heard of his death she set out for the garrison to visit her living one. The boat in which she undertook to cross to Munckholm was upset, and she was drowned."

An indignant murmur arose from the crowd at this unfeeling declaration. The old women were especially clamorous in their contradiction, and vehement in their denunciation of the slanderer. The younger ones were more quiet. The men in general muttered their disbelief in an under tone, while Braal, the fisherman, remarked to Neil, with a knowing air: "However that may be, what I said was true—*love* is at the bottom of it all."

"The soldier, irritated at the contradiction of the old women, called them all the names he could think of, which they, better skilled at this species of warfare than their opponent, returned with interest. The din and confusion became outrageous, and the scene wholly unworthy of the silent and peaceful dwelling of the dead. Suddenly, from the interior, a harsh and impe-

rious voice was heard to exclaim: "Silence! silence! you miserable old fools!" and the clamor was hushed as speedily as is the cackling of the hens by the crowing of the cock."

It may be well in this place, before we go any further, to give some description of the locality, in which was enacting, the scene we have attempted to describe. The reader has doubtless already conjectured, that it is a morgue—one of those receptacles for the dead, where are deposited, for recognition, the bodies of those who perish by accident or design. A place which is the resort of the idle, the curious, and indifferent, as well as of those who are led hither by the *painful hope*, if such an expression be allowable, of terminating the still more painful suspense into which they have been thrown, by the mysterious disappearance of some relative or friend.

At the period when our story commences, and in the wild and remote region in which the events which it narrates took place, the public authorities had not as yet attempted to decorate and set off their dead-house, with all those ingenious and fantastic funeral ornaments which modern taste has exhibited in some more enlightened communities, which might be mentioned. No richly carved sepulchral windows admitted the light into a sculptured vault, and displayed the bodies of the dead, gracefully reclining upon handsome couches, with their heads resting upon pillows, as if composed to sleep. And if by chance the door of the keeper's lodge was opened, and the eye, wearied and disgusted by dwelling upon the sad relics of mortality, wandered into the interior, it met no gay and fashionable array of furniture, and fell upon no group of merry children—as is the case in some places we could mention. No, the dead-house we are describing, exhibited death in all its hideousness; for the simple people of that day and place, had not even acquired the art of setting off their skeletons with ribbons, or trinkets.

The apartment, where the characters we have introduced were assembled, was large, gloomy, and obscure. Besides the doors, one in front, and one opening upon the port of Drontheim, in the rear, it was lighted only by a large unglazed window in the roof, through which, together with the light, fell the rain, hail, or snow, according to the weather, upon the bodies which were placed directly under it. The room, itself, was divided in the centre, by an iron railing about breast high, which was intended to protect the dead from ac-

tual contact of the public—who were only admitted to the exterior portion of the apartment. Within the railing were six blocks of black granite, placed parallel to each other; and access to these could only be had, by means of a door opening from the keeper's quarters, which were upon one side of the edifice, and also abutted in the rear upon the water. Two of these granite blocks were at present occupied by the bodies of the miner and his betrothed. The work of decomposition had already made some progress upon that of the girl, as was evident from the blue and livid spots which disfigured it; but traces of a beauty of no ordinary character still remained. The countenance of Gill Stadt, though handsome, was stern and sad; but so fearfully had his body been mangled by the fall of the rocks, that this expression might as well have been attributed to physical as to mental suffering.

Among the group which was surveying the bodies, and as we left them warmly canvassing the character of one of them; now made his appearance, an old man of tall stature, but meagre and bent. Until aroused by the noise and confusion, he had been sitting quietly upon the remnant of a stool, in one corner of the apartment; but when awakened from his fit of musing by the clamor of the women, it was he who came forward, after calling silence, as we have mentioned, and placed his hand upon the soldier's arm.

The soldier turned, and recognizing his new ally, greeted him with a hearty burst of laughter. Far different, however, was the effect produced by his appearance, upon the women—their tongues, which had been for a moment hushed, soon recommenced operations with tenfold vigor; though the object of their assault was no longer the man of war. "Look at him!" they cried, "look at the wizard!—the sorcerer!—it is that cursed Spiagudry—the keeper of the dead."

"Silence! you old wretches," reiterated the keeper. "What the devil ails you? Is this the witches' sabbath? Go home and look after your broomsticks, or they will fly away without you; go home, I say, and let this worthy descendant of the god Thor alone." Then with a grimace, which was intended to be exceedingly courteous, he turned to the soldier and said: "You were remarking, valiant sir, that this miserable woman——"

"Miserable woman!" interrupted old Olly; "hear the old Satan! yes, we are all miserable women, because, when our bodies happen to fall into his clutches, they

bring him but thirty shillings, while he gets forty for the dirty carcass of a man."

"Oh, be quiet, will you!" cried Spiagudry, "you daughters of the devil! you are like your own tea-kettles, the hotter you get the more you sing. But, tell me, my gallant king of the sword; your comrade, whose mistress this girl was—he will kill himself in despair at her loss, I take it, will he not?"

Here a fresh burst of indignation broke from the crowd. "Hear the old Pagan!—hear the wretch! the miscreant!" resounded from a score of angry voices; "he craves another human life already, for the sake of the paltry forty shillings the body will bring him."

"Well, suppose I do," retorted the keeper of the spladgest; "what is that to you? besides, what is this miner worth to me? his clothes and all he has about him go to the royal treasury. Since his majesty, Christian the Fifth, has proclaimed himself guardian of the miners, the spladgest gets none of them."

"It appears to me, neighbor Spiagudry, that you pay a great compliment to the royal treasury, naming it at the same breath with your charnel-house here," remarked old Braal the fisherman.

"Neighbor! forsooth!" exclaimed Spiagudry, indignant at the familiarity of the other; "take care you don't have to call me *landlord* before long. It's more than likely that I shall have the pleasure of lodging you on one of my stone beds here, my citizen of the seas; so keep a civil tongue in your head. As to the death of this soldier," he continued, laughing, "I only asked his comrade, to see if the good old custom of committing suicide, for a cross in love, was to be observed upon this occasion or not."

"If you wish to make money, my old leathern sack of bones," said the soldier, alluding to the keeper's meagre figure and odd attire, "take your own carcass to the viceroy's cabinet of curiosities, at Berghen, and sell it. I've known them to give its weight in gold for a much less rare specimen. But say, what do you want with me?"

"Merely this: you must know, that when they bring us bodies from the water, part of the fee goes to the fisherman. Now I want to ask of you, my illustrious successor of the gen-d'arme Thurn, to do me the favor to persuade your comrade not to drown himself; but to cut his throat, shoot himself, or put an end to his days by any other way he may like best. It cannot make much difference to him, but it

will make a great deal to me; and I am sure that he would not wish to wrong the Christian friend, whose duty and pleasure it will be, to extend the rights of hospitality to his remains. That is, of course, if his love for Guth should drive him to despair and suicide."

"But there is where you are out of your reckoning. My comrade has not the most remote intention of trespassing upon the hospitality of your six-bedded room. Despair and suicide, indeed! Why, he was tired of Guth before she was drowned, and he has got one he likes better in her place already."

Here the storm of indignation, which Spiagudry had at first hushed, and then drawn upon his own head, raged again with fresh fury against the soldier. The old women, especially, were unsparing in their maledictions, and withering was the contempt that they expressed for the garrison, and, indeed, the whole army at large. The younger ones, however, strange as it may seem, did not appear to join so cordially in the indignation of their seniors; for they had discovered that the object of all this wordy assault, although unquestionably a *mauvais sujet*, was a very good-looking fellow.

"Ye gods!" cried the soldier, "here is the witches' sabbath in full blast again. Well, if satan is obliged to listen to such a din once a week, his punishment is much worse than I had ever supposed."

There is no telling to what an extent their indignation might have carried the old fish-wives, had not a new occurrence, which at once attracted the attention of all, checked and finally swallowed up the old theme of excitement in a fresh and greater one. The noise of a crowd, rapidly approaching, was heard from without; first came some dozens of children running, leaping, and hallooing, in advance of a covered litter, which was carried by a couple of men, who were accompanied and followed by some scores of citizens, of all ages and both sexes. The doors were thrown open, and the throng rushed tumultuously into the spladgest.

"Where is that from?" demanded Spiagudry of the bearers.

"From the sands of Urchtall," was the reply.

"Oglypiglap!" cried the keeper.

A side door opened, and from the keeper's apartment entered a little man of the Lapland race, who bade the bearers follow him. Taking up the litter, which they had for a moment deposited on the floor, the bearers, together with the keeper and his

assistant, went in and shut the door behind them, leaving the company without all busied in conjecture, drawn from the length and figure of the deceased, whether it was man or woman.

In a few minutes Spiagudry and his assistant appeared within the grating, carrying between them the naked corpse of a man, which they placed upon one of the granite blocks, beside the miner and his betrothed.

"It is a long time since I've handled anything so fine as this," observed Oglyplap, with a shake of the head, as raising himself on tiptoe, he spread upon the body the splendid uniform of a captain of the regiment of Munckholm. The head and face of the deceased was very much disfigured, and the body mangled in a singular and unaccountable manner; for the wounds did not appear such as would have been inflicted by any known instrument of warfare or destruction.

"The devil!" cried the soldier; "this is an officer of my regiment! Who can it be? I can't make him out. Captain Bollar? He lost his uncle lately—but then, he inherited his estate. No, it cannot be him. Baron Klandmer? He lost his all at cards, yesterday. No, he'll win all, and more, back again. Captain Lory? He lost his dog. Paymaster Stunck? His wife has run away from him. No, no; folks do n't blow their brains out for such trifles as these. It can be none of them."

The crowd increased rapidly. At this moment, a young gentleman on horseback was passing the door. Attracted by curiosity, he alighted, threw the reins to his servant, and entered the spladgest; when, though there was nothing of pretension either in his manner or attire, he soon became the object of attention. He was clad in a simple travelling suit. From his shoulder hung a long green mantle, and from his belt a heavy sabre. In his cap, which was of the undress military order, was a long black plume, secured by a diamond buckle. His face was, in a measure, concealed by the drooping feather and the long chestnut locks which hung down on each side of his forehead. The soiled appearance of his boots and spurs gave token that he had been on the road.

When the stranger entered, a man of low stature, whose figure was entirely concealed in a cloak, and whose hands were incased in enormous gloves, was replying to the remarks of the soldier.

"Who told you," he said, "that this man did blow his brains out? He no more

killed himself, than the roof of your cathedral set itself on fire the other day."

This remark, like the *bissague*, hit in two places at once, and brought forth two different responses.

"Our cathedral!" observed Niel; "they have covered it with copper, now. It's said that it was set on fire by that wretch Hans, to make work for the miners, among whom was his protégé, Gill Stadt, who is lying there."

"What—the devil!" cried the soldier, at the same time. "Do you dare to tell me, the second arquebusier of the garrison of Munckholm, that that man did not blow his brains out?"

"He was assassinated," replied the other, coolly.

"Listen to the oracle! Go! your little gray eyes are as much obscured, as the hands you have covered so genteelly under those pretty gloves."

The eyes of the other flashed fire.

"Soldier," said he, "pray to your patron saint, that these hands never leave their mark upon you."

"Oh, come on, if you are for fighting!" said the soldier; but checking himself immediately, he added, "not now—not in the presence of the dead."

The stranger muttered some words between his teeth, in a foreign tongue, and disappeared.

"This body came from the sands of Urchtal," observed a bystander.

"From the sands of Urchtal!" exclaimed the soldier. "Why, Captain Dispolsen was to have landed there to-day, on his return from Copenhagen."

"Captain Dispolsen has not yet arrived at Munckholm," observed another person.

"They say that Hans of Iceland is actually in this quarter, now," remarked a fourth.

"Then it is possible, that this may be the captain," said the soldier, "and Hans is his murderer; for every one knows that this Iclander destroys his victims in such a manner, as to give them the appearance of being suicides."

"What sort of a man is Hans?" inquired one.

"A giant," replied another.

"A dwarf," said a third.

"Nobody has ever seen him," cried a voice.

"Hush!" said old Olly. "They say there are but three persons who have ever exchanged a word with him. This reprobate Spiagudry is one; the widow Stadt another, and this (unhappy, both in life and death,) Gill Stadt, the third."

An exclamation of horror resounded from all sides.

"Now, I'm certain that this is the body of Captain Dispolson," cried the soldier. "I know it by this steel chain, which was given him by our old prisoner, Schumaker, whom he defeated."

The young man with the black plume here broke silence. "You are certain that this is the body of Captain Dispolson?" he said to the soldier.

"Positive, upon my honor."

The young man left the apartment hastily; "Get me a boat for Munkholm, said he to his servant."

"But seignior, the general."

"Take the horses; I'll be there to-morrow. Come, am I my own master or not? Dispatch! it is nearly sundown, and I've no time to lose: get a boat."

The valet obeyed; his master embarked and the servant remained on the bank, watching him with an anxious air.

CHAPTER II.

DRONTHEIM.

THE reader will have perceived that we are at Drontheim, one of the principal cities of Norway, though not the residence of the viceroy. At the period when our tale commences, the kingdom of Norway appertained to that of Denmark, and was governed by a viceroy, who held his court at Berghen, a larger, more central, and finer town than Drontheim, notwithstanding the bad name it received from the celebrated Admiral Von Trump.

The appearance of Drontheim, as you approach it by the gulf of the same name, is attractive. The harbor is large enough, though not always easy of access. It resembles a long and wide canal, and is lined on the right side by Danish and Norwegian vessels, while the left is appropriated to the use of foreign craft; a division which is prescribed by ordinance. At the foot of this harbor upon a highly cultivated plain, is seen the city over which tower the numerous and lofty spires of its cathedral. This church, one of the most exquisite remains of the original gothic architecture, as may be easily ascertained by reference to the work of professor Schœnning, who describes it as it was before it was injured by fire—bears on its loftiest tower the episcopal cross, to which it is entitled as the cathedral of the Lutheran bishop of Drontheim. Beyond the city, in the distant blue of the horizon, may be discovered the white and icy peaks of the mountains of

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Kole, like the sharp pointed fleurons which surround an ancient crown.

In the centre of the harbor, about cannon shot from either shore, upon a wave-worn rock, stands the solitary fortress of Munkholm, the prison house at the time, to which we refer, of a captive alike celebrated for his wonderful rise, and his rapid fall.

Schumacker was of humble origin, but his consummate abilities acquired for him the favor of his sovereign, and the highest posts of honor and power in his gift. A few days saw him successively transferred from the seat of high chancellor of Denmark, and Norway, to the criminal dock, as a traitor, thence to the scaffold, upon which, at the last moment, his punishment was commuted by the king to perpetual imprisonment upon this solitary isle. To the creatures of his own creation, he owed his fall; but of this he had no great right to complain, for he had only elevated them like the steps of a ladder, that he might climb by them, to the giddy heights at which he aimed.

This man, who may almost be said to have founded the order of nobility in Denmark, had the mortification of seeing his posts and honors divided between the great men of his own making. His mortal enemy, the Count de Ahlefeld, succeeded him as high chancellor; another, General Arnsdorf, as grand marshal, controlled the military department; while a third, the bishop of Spollyson, filled the office of minister of public instruction. The only one of his enemies who did not owe his elevation to the fallen premier, was Count Ulric Frederic Guldenlew, the natural son of Frederic III., and now viceroy of Norway; and this nobleman was, of all his opponents, the most generous and fearless.

Toward this sombre rock of Munkholm the boat which bore the young man with the black plume, was now wending its way. The sun had already sunk behind the dark walls of the fortress; and so horizontal were its rays, that the peasant on the distant eastern hills of Larsynn, might see upon the bushes beside him the ill-defined shadow of the sentinel who kept watch and ward upon the donjon of Count Shumacker's prison.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORTRESS OF MUNKHOLM.

"ANDREW, tell them to sound the curfew in half an hour; let Sorsyll relieve Duckness at the great barrier; and station Malvidius on the platform of the grand tower;

let strict watch be kept at the donjon of the Lion of Slesvig ; and don't forget to fire a gun at eight, as a signal to close the gate for the night. No, stop ! Captain Dispolsen has not returned yet ; we must wait for him. Light the signal-lantern in the fanal, and observe if the beacon at Walderhog is burning, as was ordered. Above all things, don't forget to have some refreshments ready for the captain. Here ! I forgot ; mark down Toric Belfast, second arquebusier of the regiment, two days' arrest—he has been absent without leave." So said the sergeant of the guard at Monckholm, as he sat in the dark and smoky guard-room of the tower which commanded the water-gate.

The soldiers to whom he addressed himself, quitted their play or their beds, to obey his orders, and all was silence.

Before long the measured sound of oars was heard without the gate. "There comes Captain Dispolsen, at last, I suppose," said the sergeant, as he opened the grated window, which looked upon the gulf.

A boat was, in fact, visible at the water-gate.

"Who goes there ?" challenged the sergeant, in a rough voice.

"A friend ; open the gate !" was the reply.

"That won't do ! have you the pass ?"

"Yes !"

"Well, I'll come down and examine it ; but, by all the saints ! if it is not correct you shall taste the water of the gulf !" Then, shutting the window, he observed : "It's not the captain after all ; where can he be ?"

A light burned behind the iron door which opened upon the water ; the gate creaked upon its hinges, and the sergeant took from the hands of the new-comer a parchment, which he examined carefully.

"Pass on !" he said, at length. "Stop a moment, however ; take the buckle out of your hat ; it is contrary to orders to enter a royal prison with any article of jewellery ; the regulation exempts only the king and the members of the royal family, the viceroy and the viceregal family, the bishop and the commander of the garrison. You don't pretend to be either of those personages, I take it."

The young man, without reply, took the proscribed buckle from his hat, and handed it to the fisherman who had ferried him over. The latter, fearful lest he should repent his generosity, hastened to put as large a space of water as he could between the giver and his gift.

While the sergeant, grumbling at the

imprudence of the authorities who granted passes so freely, locked the gate, and made his way back to the guard-room, the young man, throwing his cloak across his shoulders, turned rapidly through the vault of the lower tower, then through the place d'arms and the artillery barracks, where were some ancient culverins—which may be seen at this day in the museum of Copenhagen—until he was arrested by the peremptory challenge of a sentinel ; he had arrived at the grand barrier, which, however, was raised upon the exhibition of his parchment. From thence, followed by the soldier, he hastened across one of the courts which flank the principal square, as if perfectly acquainted with the localities of the place, till he reached the huge round rock, upon which is built the donjon of the Lion of Slesvig ; so called from being the place where Rolf, the dwarf, confined his brother, Jotham the Lion, duke of Slesvig.

Here the young man climbed the steps, roughly hewn in the rock, which conducted to the basement of one of the towers which served as the only entrance to the donjon : arrived at the postern, he took from the hands of the sentinel of the grand-barrier, who had accompanied him, a brazen horn, upon which he wound a pealing blast.

"Come in ! come in !" called out a voice from the interior ; "I suppose it is that cursed captain."

The postern was unlocked, and, upon opening, disclosed to the new-comer the interior of a gothic saloon, dimly lighted. Upon a mass of cloaks and skins lay a young officer, stretched out at his ease ; on the floor, by his side, was one of those old-fashioned lamps which used to be hung from the ceilings in former times : he held a book in his hand, and the elegance of his costume and appointments contrasted strongly with the mean furniture and accommodations of the apartment.

On the entrance of the new-comer, he turned half round, and saluted him carelessly :

"Ah ! captain ! how are you, captain ? I've no doubt you are sorry you have kept me waiting, stranger as I am to you ; but we shall get acquainted soon enough. Allow me to condole with you upon your return to this venerable château ; as for me, during the short time I've been here, I have positively grown old and thin, to a degree which is startling ; my face is getting wrinkled, my hair turning gray ; and when I go back to Copenhagen, to my sister's wedding, the devil take me, if I believe five women in a hundred will know

me. Tell me, do they still wear colored ribbons at the knee in Copenhagen? Are there any new novels by Madame Scudery translated? I stick to Clælie yet; I suppose it is still read at Copenhagen; it is my code of gallantry. For all that, I've not much to boast of. The pretty prisoner will not smile upon me. Oh! if it were not for my father's orders—I must tell you in confidence, captain, that my father sent me here—don't mention it—but he sent me here to do—you know what—to Schumacker's daughter. Now, I'm tired of it already; it's a waste of time; pretty as she is, she is not a woman, but a statue. She will not even look at me, but weeps incessantly."

Here, the young man, who had not hitherto attempted to check the volubility of the officer, uttered a sharp cry of astonishment—

"What!" he exclaimed, "do you tell me that you were sent here to seduce the daughter of the unfortunate Schumacker?"

"Seduce? well, I believe that is what they call it in Copenhagen. But it can't be done! I defy the devil to seduce her! What do you think? Yesterday, being on guard, I put on an entirely new French mantle, which I have just received from Paris, expressly on her account. Now, will you believe it, she would not so much as lift her eyes to look at me, although I passed through her apartment three or four times, jingling my new spurs, the rowels of which are as large as a Lombardy ducat. By the way, that is still the latest fashion, is it not?"

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the young man, striking his forehead. "I am amazed!"

"Is it not strange?" continued the officer, who entirely misapprehended the cause of his emotion. "She paid not the slightest attention to me. It seems incredible; but still it is true."

The young man paced the apartment up and down, in violent agitation.

"Will you not take some refreshment, Captain Dispsen?" asked the officer.

"I'm not Captain Dispsen," returned the other, stopping short.

"How!" exclaimed the officer, raising himself upon his seat. "Then who are you? and how dare you intrude yourself at this hour?"

The young man presented his passport: "It mentions not who I am. I come to see Count Griffenfeld,—your prisoner I should have said."

"The count—the count," murmured the officer, mistrustfully; "but this passport is all right: it bears the signature of the vice-

chancellor Grummond de Knud: '*Permit the bearer to visit at his pleasure, all the Royal Prisons.*' Grummond de Knud, is the brother of the old General Levin de Knud, who commands at Drontheim. Now you must know, that this old general educated my future brother-in-law——"

"Spare me any more details upon your family affairs, lieutenant. Do you not think you have already said quite enough in regard to them?"

"The impertinent rascal is right," said the lieutenant to himself, biting his lips, and then he called aloud: "Here, hussier! hussier! conduct this stranger to Schumacker's apartment."

While the young man and his guide crossed the deserted garden of the donjon, the officer turned upon his side, and continued the perusal of the adventures of the Amazon Clælie and Horatius Le Borgne.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GENERAL AND THE VALET.

ON the same evening, a serving-man, with two horses, entered the court-yard of the government house at Drontheim. He dismounted, and with a strong shake of the head, proceeded to lead the animals toward the stable, when some one seized him roughly by the arm and exclaimed:

"What, Paul! alone? Where is your master?"

It was the old General Levin de Knud, who had, from his window, perceived the entrance of the valet into the court-yard. He had hurried down, and, with even more anxiety in his looks than in his speech, he inquired of the lacquey for his master.

"May it please your excellency," replied Paul, with a low reverence; "my master is no longer in Drontheim."

"What! he has been here then?" exclaimed the general, "and departed without seeing his old friend? What means this?"

"He arrived, and departed, this very evening."

"This evening? But where did he stop? and where is he gone?"

"He alighted at the spladgest, and has gone over to Munkholm."

"Ah! I was afraid he had gone to the other world. But what did he want at the spladgest? and what took him to the fortress, without calling upon me? He is a real knight-errant. But it's my own fault, I suppose, for having brought him up so. I tried to make him free, in spite of the shackles of his rank."

CHAPTER V.

THE DONJON OF THE LION OF SLESVIG.

"He is no slave to etiquette, certainly," said Paul.

"But I fear he is the slave of his own caprice. However, he will soon be back, I suppose. Go, and get your supper, Paul. But stay," continued the general, with an air of anxiety, "did you stop much on your road?"

"No, general. We came direct from Berghen; my master was in poor spirits."

"In poor spirits? Something must have taken place between him and his father. Does he not like this marriage?"

"I know not, seignior; but 'tis said that his highness insists upon it."

"Insists upon it," do you say, Paul? The viceroy insists upon it. Then it follows, of course, that Ordoner objects to it?"

"I do n't know, your excellency, but he seems cast down."

"Cast down! Do you know how his father received him on his return?"

"The first time they met, was at the camp, near Berghen. His highness said, 'I do not see you often, my son.' To which my master replied, 'So much the better for me, my lord and father, if you miss me during my absence.' Then he gave him an account of his doings in the north, and his highness was pleased to express his approbation. The next day my master left the palace; all he said, was, 'They want me to marry; but I must see my second father, General Levin, first.' So I saddled the horses, and here we are."

"So, my good Paul," said the general, in an altered voice, "he called me his second father, did he?"

"He did, your excellency."

"Then, curse me if he shall be obliged to marry against his will, if I can help it, even if I incur the displeasure of the king. Still, the daughter of the grand chancellor of the two kingdoms—apropos, Paul, does he know that his mother-in-law that is to be, the Countess de Ahlefeld, has seen him incognito, for a day or two, and that the count is expected?"

"I do not know, general."

"Oh, yes!" said the old governor, to himself; "to be sure he knows it; and that explains his sudden departure." Then kindly dismissing Paul to his supper, and returning the salute of the sentry who was on guard, he repaired to his quarters with an air of even more inquietude than he had left them with.

AFTER having conducted the stranger up the spiral staircases, and through the lofty halls of the donjon of the Lion of Slesvig, the hussier at last threw open a door, and introduced him into the presence of the personage he sought, and here again the first words that met the young man's ears were, "Is that Captain Dispolsen, at last?" The question was asked by an old man who was seated with his back to the door—his elbows upon a table, and his head resting upon his hands. He was clad in a long dark robe of coarse thick stuff. Over a bed at the extremity of the apartment, might be seen a broken armorial escutcheon, about which were hung the collars of the orders of the Elephant and of the Dannebrog. Below the escutcheon was the coronet of a count reversed, which, together with a hand of justice in two fragments tied crosswise, completed this grotesque ornamental display. The old man was Schumacker.

No, seignior," replied the hussier; then turning to the stranger, he said, "that is the prisoner;" and leaving them together, he closed the door, not hearing, or not attending to the response of the old man, who said in a harsh voice, "I wish to see no one but the captain."

At these words, the stranger remained quietly by the door, hesitating what course to pursue. The prisoner, believing himself alone—for he had not looked about for an instant—relapsed into his silent reverie. After a few moments, he suddenly exclaimed: "The captain has certainly abandoned and betrayed me! Oh, man! man! You are like the piece of ice which the Arab found, and took it for a diamond; he put it carefully away in his wallet, and when he came to look for it, found nothing but a drop of water."

"I am not such a man," said the stranger.

Schumacker rose hastily, and confronted him. "Who are you? Some impertinent eavesdropper? or a spy of Guldenlew's?"

"Do not slander the vice regent, noble count."

"Noble count! Do you call me so to flatter me? If so, you waste your time, for I have no longer any favors to bestow."

"I never knew you when you had; nevertheless, I have been, and am your friend."

"You must hope *something* from me. The unfortunate are never recollected, un-

less the chance of gaining something by them remains."

"It is I, noble count, who have cause to complain of being forgotten; for you seem to have forgotten me, though I remember you. I am Ordoner."

A flash of joy for a moment enlightened the old man's countenance. A smile which he was unable to repress, shone through his white flowing beard, like a sunbeam through a cloud.

"Ordoner—welcome Ordoner, the traveller. A thousand thanks, that while remaining free, you did not forget the prisoner."

"And had you really forgotten me, then?" inquired Ordoner.

"Forgotten you," replied Schumacker, relapsing into his former train of melancholy thoughts—"yes, as one forgets the passing breeze, which refreshes him, grateful only if it return not as a tempest to destroy him."

"Count Griffenfeld, did you not expect that I would return?"

"I, old Schumacker, did not; but there is a young girl here, who, this very day reminded me, that it was a year ago on the eighth of May last, since you departed."

Ordoner trembled with joy, while he faltered out, "Do you speak of your Ethel, count?"

"Who else?"

"And does your daughter, then, deign to count the days of my absence? It has been a dreary time to me, count. I have visited every part of Norway from Christiana to Wardhouse, but my heart has ever been travelling toward Drontheim."

"Enjoy your liberty while you possess it, young man. You can never rightly appreciate it, till you lose it. But tell me, who are you? I wish you bore another name. The son of one of my mortal enemies is called Ordoner."

"Perhaps, noble count, that mortal enemy may not be so hostile to you, as you are to him."

"You evade my question; but no matter; keep your secret. I shall find, hereafter, perhaps, that the unknown fruit is a deadly poison."

"Count! count!" exclaimed the young man, at first in a tone of irritation, and then of pity and reproach.

"Oh! you put me out of patience, by always taking the part of that implacable Guldenlew."

The viceroy, said the young man, gravely, "is about to issue an order that you have the freedom of the entire donjon of the Lion of Slesvig, without guards,

Thus much I heard at Berghen, and you will doubtless soon be made aware of the change yourself."

"It is a favor I never dared to hope for. I believe I never expressed a wish for it, excepting to you. However, it is but natural that they should lighten the weight of my fetters, as the weight of my years increases. When I have become entirely helpless from age, they will, doubtless, set me free."

The old man smiled bitterly, and then continued, "Do you still retain your foolish ideas of independence?"

"If I did not, I should not be here."

"How did you come to Drontheim?"

"On horseback."

"And how to Munkholm?"

"In a boat."

"Foolish fellow! You call yourself independent, and yet you are indebted to a horse and a boat for the power of locomotion. Your own members do not execute your will; an animal, whether human or beast, must do it for you; and yet you say *you* do what you will."

"But I force them to execute my will."

"Yes; you acquire the right of commanding in some things, by agreeing to obey in others. I tell you there is no such thing as independence, except in solitude."

"I fear you are a misanthrope, noble count."

The old man again smiled bitterly. "I am sorry," said he, "that I am a man; and I laugh at any one who attempts to reconcile me to humanity. You will find out, if you know it not already, that adversity is the parent of distrust, as prosperity is of ingratitude. But tell me, since you are just from Berghen, what fortunate wind fills the sail of Captain Dispolsen? Some good luck must have befallen him, for he has forgotten *me*."

Ordoner became at once grave and embarrassed. "Dispolsen, noble count?" said he, at last—"it was on account of him that I came to see you. I know that he possessed your entire confidence, and——"

"You knew!" interrupted the prisoner, with anxiety and alarm. "You are mistaken. No human being possesses my confidence. Dispolsen had in his hands some of my papers—my important papers; and it was on my account that he went to Copenhagen. I admit that I placed more reliance upon him than upon any one else, but that was because I had never rendered him a service."

"Count, I have this day seen Dispolsen in——"

"That is sufficient; your troubled air tells me the rest. He is a traitor!"

"He is dead."

"Dead?" cried the prisoner, folding his arms, and looking down. Then raising his head, he fixed his eyes upon Ordoner, and said, "When I told you that some good fortune had befallen him—" Then casting a glance upon the wall, where hung the dishonored relics of his former greatness, he passed his hand across his brow, as if to chase away a painful train of thought—"Tis not for him I mourn," he continued; "'tis but one man less in the world; nor for myself, nor for what I have lost, but for my daughter—my unfortunate, unprotected daughter. She will fall a victim to this malignant conspiracy of my persecutors, when her father is taken from her. What will become of her!"

He again addressed himself to Ordoner. "How did he die? Where did you see him?"

"I saw him in the spladgest. It is uncertain whether he was assassinated, or committed suicide."

"That is an important point, however. If he was assassinated, I know from whence the blow came; and then all is lost. He had about him the proofs of the conspiracy which has ruined me—they would have saved me, and destroyed my enemies. Doubtless, into their hands they have fallen. Alas! my poor Ethel!"

"My lord count, I will ascertain for you in the morning, if Dispolsen was assassinated or not."

Ordoner took his leave, and Schumacker in silence, followed him, with a look of such utter despair, as was more affecting than even the calm of death itself.

Passing through the ante-chamber, Ordoner entered a long corridor, at the farther extremity of which was a half-opened door, through which a subdued light was gently stealing. Approaching with a noiseless step, he perceived through the crevice, a young girl upon her knees before a gothic oratory. She was clad in a flowing robe of black crape, relieved about the neck by a collar of white lawn; an attire which conveyed, as far as dress can be said to convey anything, the idea of innocence in misfortune. Her attitude was at once devotional and graceful; and her countenance of singular sweetness and beauty, was rendered still more striking, by jet black eyes and raven tresses, those characteristics of southern loveliness so rarely found in the bleak and chilly north. She prayed: Ordoner heard her prayer, and there were portions of it where his heart beat quicker

than its usual wont. She prayed for her father—for the mighty fallen—for the captive left desolate; and then she recited the psalm of deliverance with a voice full of filial enthusiasm and devotion. She prayed also, for another, whose name he heard not, for her lips never uttered it; but he marked that in connection with this petition, she recited the canticle of the Sulamite, invoking the return of the well beloved.

Ordoner gently retired into the corridor, there was something so sacred and holy in the place and in the scene, that he felt as if his presence almost profaned it. At length the door opened, and the young girl, with lamp in hand, came slowly forth. Ordoner could not speak; overcome with emotion, he drew back into the shade, but his deep drawn breath and the rustling of his mantle betrayed him. The young girl started in alarm, uttered an exclamation of terror, and dropped her lamp, which was extinguished. In an instant Ordoner caught her in his arms—"Tis me," he whispered gently.

"Tis Ordoner!" replied the young girl, upon whose ear, the last tones of his voice, though heard more than a year before, still dwelt.

At this moment the moon, emerging from a cloud, shone brightly upon the pair, and betrayed the young girl's face radiant with joy.

"It is Seignior Ordoner!"

"It is Countess Ethel!"

"Why do you call me countess?"

"Why do you call me seignior?"

The young girl was silent, but smiled; Ordoner was silent, and sighed.

"How did you come here?"

"Excuse me, if I intrude upon you; I came to see your father."

"Ah, you only came to see my father?" inquired the young girl, in a tone of pique.

Ordoner thought this was unkind, and made no reply.

"I suppose you have been in Drontheim this long time," Ethel continued, in the same strain; "your absence from here has not seemed long to you."

Ordoner, still more hurt, continued silent.

"Oh, don't fear that I shall reproach you, seignior," continued Ethel, who began to think his silence an admission of the charges, and in consequence became seriously vexed; "you are master of your own time. But, sir," she added, "I trust you have not been listening to my private devotions?"

"Countess," replied the young man, after some hesitation, "I did overhear you."

"Ah, Seigniot Ordoner, that was unkind."

"I did not come to listen, countess," said Ordoner, embarrassed; "but I could not well avoid overhearing you, as I waited till you came forth from the oratory."

"I was praying for my father," said the young girl, with an inquiring look at her lover, as if she expected an answer to this simple remark.

Ordoner remained silent.

"I also prayed," continued Ethel, watching anxiously what effect her words would have; "I also prayed for one of your name—for the son of the Viceroy Guldenlew; you know we are bidden to pray for all the world, and especially for those who persecute us."

"Ordoner Guldenlew," replied the young man, "is to be pitied, if you count him one of your persecutors; but much to be envied, if he has an interest in your prayers."

The cool and distant air with which these words were spoken, converted Ethel's pique into alarm.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "I did not pray for him—I know not what I was doing. I detest the son of the viceroy—I never saw him; but do not look upon me so coldly. Have I offended you? can you make no allowance for a poor prisoner, who is confined in solitude, while you can roam at pleasure, and enjoy the company of the beautiful and gay, who are free and happy like yourself?"

"Like me, countess?" cried Ordoner.

Ethel could no longer restrain her emotion; Ordoner threw himself at her feet.

"Did you not tell me," said she, smiling through her tears, "that your absence seemed very short?"

"What! I, countess?"

"Do not call me countess," said Ethel, tenderly; "I am no longer one, you know, and you should *never* call me so, even were I still so."

The young man sprung to his feet, and clasped her to his heart.

"Oh, Ethel! my own dear Ethel! call me, then, your Ordoner. Do you indeed love me?" he continued, kissing her eyes yet moist with tears.

What the girl's reply was, could not be heard, for Ordoner ravished it from her mouth, before it could reach the air, with a kiss, which in the eyes of Heaven united them for ever.

"No, no! believe it not; I was like the blind man, who after years of darkness is restored to sight, and shrinks for a moment from the first beams of glorious day!"

"'Tis I, rather, who am like the blind; from childhood, this prison has been my home, my poor father my only companion; to solace him, my only joy. You came, we loved; you were my sun; you departed, and all was dark; and then, for the first time, I panted for that liberty which I have never known."

"And I," replied Ordoner, "no longer wish for liberty, unless you can enjoy it with me."

"What! Ordoner!" exclaimed Ethel, eagerly, "will you never leave us more?"

This question recalled the young man to his senses.

"Yes, dear Ethel, I must leave you, and to night," he replied; "but to-morrow I will return, and to-morrow I must leave you again; but when I next return, it will be to part with you no more."

"Ah!" sighed the young girl, "another long, long absence!"

"Fear not, my best beloved, I shall soon return; return to free you from this prison or share it with you ever more."

"A prisoner with him;" she murmured softly. "Ah, deceive me not. Can such a happy lot be mine?"

"How shall I swear! how can I convince you!" cried Ordoner clasping her again in his arms. "Dear, dear Ethel, are you not my wife?"

"I am yours," she murmured faintly, as their two pure and noble hearts beat against each other.

A loud burst of laughter, from some one close at hand, awoke our lovers from their dream of bliss; and in a moment a man, wrapped in a mantle, who had stolen unawares upon them, disclosed a dark lantern which he carried under his cloak, and threw its light directly upon the pure features of the frightened Ethel, and the haughty countenance of the indignant Ordoner.

"*Courage!* my pretty fair one, *Courage!*" cried the new comer. "It seems to me that, considering the short time you have been resident in the land of *tenderness*, you cannot have followed all the windings of the stream of *sentiment*, but have taken some short cut to reach so speedily the *Hamlet* of kisses."

In the speaker will readily be recognized the lieutenant; the admirer of Madame de Scudery. Interrupted in his perusal of *Clélie* by the sound of the clock, which our lovers had not heard, he proceeded, as officer of the guard, to make his rounds. In passing through the corridor, he had caught the sound of voices at the farther extremity, and naturally curious, he had

concealed his lantern under his cloak, and approached our lovers so gently, that their first intimation of his presence was the rude peal of laughter which had so disagreeably startled them from their united embrace.

Ethel at first motioned to Ordoner to fly, but at the same instant she clung to him as if for protection, and buried her blushing face in his bosom.

"Fear nothing!" exclaimed the young man, with a voice and gesture truly royal, "he shall dearly rue who gives you cause for alarm."

"Oh yes," repeated the lieutenant, "I shall dearly rue it if I have frightened my pretty lady."

"Seignior lieutenant," said Ordoner, laughingly, "I recommend you to be silent."

"Seignior insolence," replied the officer, "I recommend the same to you."

"Do you understand me sir!" repeated Ordoner, more sternly. "Let silence be the apology for your impertinence."

"The same to you, take your own advice, responded the lieutenant."

Ordoner gently placed the trembling Ethel upon one of the ancient *fauteuils* which stood against the walls of the corridor, and seized the officer's arm with a grasp of iron.

"Lieutenant," said he, in a low tone, "my patience is shorter than my sword."

The lieutenant, half angry and half laughing, struggled to release himself.

"Hollo! my good fellow," he exclaimed, "do you know that the pourpoint you are handling so roughly is the best of Abingdon velvet? Oh, I understand what you mean, but I cannot do you the honor. It will not answer—prince must encounter prince, and peasant peasant, so the Beau Leandre says."

"If he had said *coward* must encounter *coward*, I should not have asked the *honor*," replied Ordoner, throwing him rudely off.

"Now, my good man, if you but wore the uniform I should take serious offence."

"If I do not wear the lace and tassels I wear the sword," said Ordoner disdainfully, throwing back his cloak and grasping the hilt of his heavy sabre—"now sir!" Here Ethel, alarmed at the symptoms of approaching conflict sprang forward, threw her arms around her lover, and entreated him to forbear.

"You do wisely my beauty, if you wish to protect this juvenal from chastisement," said the lieutenant, who had put himself on his guard. Cyrus was upon the point of encountering Cambyzes, I may say, though

it is doing him too much honor to compare this boor to Cambyzes."

"For heavens sake, Seignior Ordoner, let me not be the cause or the witness of bloodshed," said Ethel, and then raising her eyes full of tears to his face, she whispered, "dear, dear Ordoner, for my sake."

Ordoner slowly returned his half-drawn blade to its scabbard, and the lieutenant, who had already done the same, exclaimed:

"Upon my honor, chevalier—which title I give you because you seem to deserve it, though I know not if you have any right to it—we have borne ourselves rather in accordance with the laws of valor, than those of courtesy. The fair damsel is right, this sort of thing should not come off in the presence of the ladies, though they have no right to complain that they do so come off on their account. All we can do now, is to defer the matter, and if you will fix the time and place, I'll risk my fine Toledo blade and Merida poniard against the best hatchet you can get from the forges of Askreuth, and hardest cutteau that was ever tempered in the waters of the Sparbo."

"You shall be informed of the time and place hereafter," said Ordoner, after a moment's reflection.

"So be it," replied the lieutenant. "And if it allows me time to be present at my sister's marriage, so much the better; for you must know, sir, who ever you are, that you are to encounter the brother-in-law that is to be, of that mighty lord, the son of the viceroy of Norway; Baron Ordoner Guldenlew, upon occasion of whose "*illustrious union*" (as Astumenes has it) with my sister, he is to be created Count Danneskiold, a colonel in the army, and a chevalier of the order of the Elephant, at which time, I also, who am the son of the chancellor of the two kingdoms, shall doubtless be promoted to a captaincy."

"Very well, very well, lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt," replied Ordoner with impatience, "you are not a captain yet, nor the viceroy's son a colonel; but swords are always swords, and that will suffice for us."

"Yes," muttered the lieutenant between his teeth, "and boors are always boors, do all you will to raise them to your own level."

"Now, chevalier," continued Ordoner, "you understand the laws of courtesy sufficiently well to know that you are not, in the meantime, to enter the donjon under any pretext, and that you are to preserve a profound silence in regard to all that has occurred."

"Oh! as to silence, you may rely upon me. I'll be as mute as Mutius Scevola,

when he had his hand upon the brazier. And for entering the donjon, neither I nor any of the garrison, are to enter it hereafter. I received orders to-day, to give Schumacker the freedom of the place unguarded. A very imprudent step, by the way, don't you think so? I should have informed him of it this evening, but I wore out one half the time, and all my strength, in trying to get on my new cracovienne boots. Come, don't you want to see them?"

During this conversation, Ethel, who, satisfied that the duel was interrupted, had not understood that it was only deferred, had taken her departure, after whispering in Ordoner's ear, the word "to-morrow."

"I wish, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt, you would do me the favor to let me out of the fortress."

"Willingly," answered the lieutenant, "though it is rather late; or, perhaps I should say early by this time. But how will you get a boat?"

"I'll take care of that," was the reply.

With every appearance of good understanding, the two then traversed the garden, the circular and square courts, (where without the company of the officer of the rounds, Ordoner would have been stopped,) passed the grand barrier, through the artillery arsenal, the place d'Armes, and finally arrived at the basse tour, whose iron gate was opened, at the command of the officer.

"Au revoir, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt," said Ordoner.

"Au revoir!" said the officer. "You are a brave fellow, I doubt not; though I know not who you are, not even if you are of rank sufficient to ask a gentleman to be your second, in our coming duel."

They shook hands, and the lieutenant, humming a song of Lullio, returned to his quarters, to admire his Polish boots and seek his couch.

Ordoner, left upon the door-sill, which was even with the water, quietly divested himself of his upper garments, which he wrapped in his mantle, and secured by means of his sword-belt to his head; then acting upon the principles of independence inculcated by Schumacker, he plunged into the cold waters of the gulf, and struck out boldly in the direction of the spladgest—a point of destination, by the way, where he was pretty sure to arrive either dead or alive.

His lately finished journey had fatigued him, and it was not without a painful struggle that he reached the shore. As soon, however, as he had done so, he clothed himself, and made with all speed for the

spladgest, whose black mass, at a short distance, frowned over the water.

On approaching this edifice, he heard the sound of voices, and discovered a light in the dead-room. Surprised at this, he knocked loudly at the outer gate. The noise ceased, and the light disappeared. He knocked again. The light reappeared, and shining through the upper opening, gave him a glimpse of a dark figure upon the roof above. A third time, Ordoner knocked loudly, and this time with the hilt of his sabre, calling out: "Open, in the name of his majesty and the prince viceroy!"

The door opened slowly, and the tall and haggard figure of Spiagudry, holding in his hands, which were covered with blood, a lamp which was almost extinguished, stood before him.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE DEAD-HOUSE SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF ORDONER FOR MONCKHOLM.

ABOUT an hour after the traveller with the black plume had left the spladgest, it was nightfall. The crowd had dispersed, and Oglypiglap closed the outer door of the funereal edifice, while his master, Spiagudry, for the last time, arranged the bodies which had been deposited in his charge. Both then retired to their humble domicile; when Oglypiglap betook himself to his mattress, and his master, seated at a table covered with old books, dried plants, bones and fossils, soon lost himself in those learned and useful researches, which, innocent, and indeed beneficent as they were, had earned for him, as we have seen, among the populace the reputation of a magician and a sorcerer.

After some hours of study and meditation, he was about to give up his book for his bed, when his attention was arrested by this strange and ominous passage of the sage Tormodus Torfæus: "*A man lights his lamp, and, before he extinguishes it, death is at his door.*"

"By your leave, learned doctor," said Spiagudry, "that shall not be my case to-night!" and he raised his lamp to blow it out.

At this moment a voice from the dead-room called—"Spiagudry!"

The old keeper trembled in every limb, not that he feared that the inmates of his dreaded abode were about to rise in mutiny—he was too much of a philosopher to be disturbed by imaginary terrors—it was because he too well recognized the tones

of that voice, that the old man shuddered and grew faint.

"Spiagudry!" resounded again through the vault; "must I tear your ears open to make myself heard?"

"Oh, Saint Hospice pity me!" exclaimed the affrighted old man, as with a faltering step, which fear both urged and impeded, he made his way to the postern, and opened the door into the chamber of the dead.

The lamp which he bore in his hand, shone upon as hideous a picture as could well be imagined. On one side was Spiagudry himself, tall, meagre, and ghastly pale; on the other, confronting him with no amicable expression of countenance, or feature, stood a being in human form, who was indeed fearful to look upon. He was apparently a man of low stature, clad from head to foot with blood-stained skins of beasts. He stood at the feet of the corpse of Gill Stadt, whose body, together with that of the captain and the drowned girl, filled the background of the picture.

There was something more or less than human in the countenance of this strange being; he had a long and thick beard, of fiery red, with hair of the same color overhanging his low forehead; his mouth was enormous, and his open lips of livid hue, displayed a set of strong, white, and very sharp teeth; his nose was prominent, and curved, like an eagle's beak.

"Why! you cursed old spectre!" exclaimed the unknown; "what do you mean by keeping me waiting thus long; did you not hear me?"

"Pardon me, mighty master!" faltered Spiagudry, with a humble reverence; "I was sound asleep."

"Sound asleep! I'm a mind to set you so sound asleep that you will never wake, and put you to bed myself on one of your granite couches here, instead of your nest of straw yonder." The old man shuddered. "Eh!" continued the other, "what aile the old fool? Is not my presence agreeable to you?"

"Oh, my master and lord," replied Spiagudry, with a faint and sickly effort to smile; "it is too great an honor and happiness to be permitted to receive you; what are your excellency's commands?"

"Honor and happiness! you old tailless fox," repeated the other, with a sneer; "my excellency's commands are, that you bring me the clothes of Gill Stadt, the miner."

"I have them not, mighty master," replied the old man. "The miners are wards of the king, and all they have is taken to the royal treasury."

"The unknown turned musingly to the naked body of the youth. "Yes!" he exclaimed; they treat the wretched miner as the fishermen of the coast do the eider-duck—build it a nest that they may know where to catch it, and pluck it bare." Then, raising the heavy corpse without an effort, he clasped it to his breast, and gave vent to a sort of wailing and lamentation, which, void of all articulate sound, save now and then a word in some unknown tongue, resembled the moaning of a bear that had lost her cubs.

"Tell me," he said, at last, turning sharply to Spiagudry—"tell me, you cursed old wizard, what is the name of that arquebuser of Monckholm, whose evil destiny it was to win the affections of this worthless girl from Gill?"

"My lord, I cannot tell," replied Spiagudry; "I never knew."

"No matter—then they shall all perish. By the axe of Ingolphe, the Exterminator, I'll destroy every living soul that wears the uniform; I'll burn the whole forest to make sure of the poison tree. I've begun already; there is one sacrificed to Gill's remains—that captain I slew this very day at the Sands of Urchtal! O Gill! Gill! you were all my hope! Are you gone? is this all that remains of one who could catch the seal in the waves, and the chamois on his mountain path?—is this the hand that could strangle the bear with its grasp?—these the feet that could run the length of Drontheim in a day, and climb the loftiest ice-peaks as the ivy does the oak? Hushed is the voice that, from the cliff of the stormy Kongsburg, was heard above the thunder. The terrible race of Ingolphe shall no longer live in you and yours. Never shall I resign to your hands the fearful axe. I am the last of my line, and from your scull I must drink the hot blood of foes and the bitter water of the seas."

After this strange and demoniac rhapsody, the unknown slipped the gloves from his hand, which were garnished with long and sharp nails, like the claws of a beast; and beckoning Spiagudry to assist him, he proceeded, in defiance of the entreaties and protestations of the keeper, who assured him that the sacrilege was most surely punished by the law, to separate the crown from the remaining portion of the head of the miner. This he did by means of his axe and poniard, and then gave it to the keeper to cleanse, a task which he was well qualified to perform, from his acquaintance with anatomical preparations.

It was in vain that the wretched keeper had represented, that upon him would

fall the penalty of thus mutilating the dead. Without deigning to listen to him, the unknown took the now white and polished scull of his son, which he secured about his person, and turning to Spiagudry, said:

"I have a commission for you: take this steel casket, which I found upon the body of this officer of Monckholm; it is massive and heavy, added to which it is secured so carefully, that it doubtless contains gold and jewels, so much more precious than life in the eyes of man; here, take this to the widow Stadt, at the hamlet of Thoctree, and give it her in behalf of her son.

He drew from his pouch a box or casket of steel, curiously secured, which he handed to Spiagudry, who received it with every manifestation of respect and obedience.

"Now, obey my orders faithfully," he continued: "recollect, we meet again. I know you are even more cowardly than avaricious, and you shall answer to me for the faithful performance of them."

"With my soul, master."

"No; but with your blood and bones!"

At this moment, a loud knocking was heard at the door of the spladgest; the keeper trembled and covered the lamp with his hand.

"What is that?" growled the other; "why, you old sinner, are you scared again? What will you do when you hear the last trump sound?"

A second and louder knock was heard.

"Some dead man is in a hurry for a shelter," said the stranger.

"No;" replied the keeper, "they don't bring the dead here at this hour."

"Dead or living, I'll not wait for him. Spiagudry, be mute, be faithful—and I swear to you by the spirit of Ingolphe and the skull of Gill, that you shall pass in review, in this spladgest, the corpses of the whole regiment of Monckholm."

Then securing the skull under his robe, he sprang lightly upon the shoulders of Spiagudry, and vaulted with the agility of a cat, through the opening in the ceiling, out upon the roof.

A third knock now made the whole spladgest resound, while a voice called loudly, "Open, in the name of the king and the viceroy!" The old keeper, half bewildered by the terrors he had undergone and those in prospect, at length made his way to the door and opened it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PALACE OF THE GOVERNOR--THE COUNTESS AND HER PARAMOUR.

AFTER quitting Paul, the governor of Drontheim entered his cabinet, threw himself into his easy chair, and by way of banishing unpleasant thoughts from his mind, directed one of his secretaries to read over the petitions which had been presented during the day.

The secretary obeyed, and commenced as follows:

"No. 1. The Reverend Doctor Anglyvius, prays that the Reverend Doctor Foxtipp, may be removed from the office of Director of the Episcopal Library, for ignorance and incompetency. The petitioner will not presume to advise the government whom to appoint in the place of the present incompetent librarian, but would respectfully state, that he, himself, has for a long time exercised the functions of librarian at—"

"Send the fool to the bishop," cried the governor: "go on with the next."

"No. 2. Athunasius Munder, chaplain of the prisons, demands the pardon of twelve condemned, whom he represents as penitent. He asks it upon the occasion, and in honor of the nuptials of his lordship Baron Ordener Guldenlew, son of his highness the viceroy, and the noble Lady Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt, daughter of the grand chancellor of the two kingdoms."

"Let that remain for consideration," said the governor.

"No. 3. Faust Prudens Destrombrides, asks to have the honor of composing the Epithalamium upon the same glorious occasion."

"Ah, ha! the brave old fellow; he must be very old. I think it was he who prepared the Epithalamium in honor of the projected marriage between Schumacker, then Count Griffenfeldt, and the Princess Louisa Charlotte de Holstein Augustenburgh. I'm afraid," muttered the governor between his teeth, "that Faust Prudens is fated to be the poet laureat of broken matches. Defer the petition, and see if there be not room for our friend the poet, in the hospital of Drontheim."

"No. 4. The miners of the Guldbruanshall, of the islands of Farer Sued Mær, Hubfallo, Røeras, and Kongsberg, ask to be freed from the royal guardianship."

"These miners are always in difficulty. 'Tis said they grumble if one takes time to consider their requests. Defer this petition for future examination."

"No. 5. Braal, the fisherman, in accord-

ance with the *Odelschreihit*, gives notice of his intention to repurchase his patrimony."

"No 6. The Syndics of Næs, Levig, Indal, Skougen, Sparbo, and other bourgs and villages of Drontheim, pray that a price may be set upon the head of a brigand, incendiary, and assassin, called Hans, a native, as is said, of Klipstaudar, in Iceland. Nichol Orugix, the executioner of Drontheim, opposes this petition, inasmuch as the right to execute said assassin belongs to him alone. Benignus Spiagudry, who would be entitled to the body, supports the petition."

"This bandit is a dangerous fellow, especially when there is a spirit of disaffection at work among the miners. Let a reward of a thousand crowns be offered for his head."

"No. 7. Benignus Spiagudry, physician, antiquarian, sculptor, mineralogist, naturalist, botanist, chymist, mechanician, astronomer, theologian, grammarian——"

"Well, well, that will do; what does the keeper of the spladgest want?"

The secretary, turning over many leaves of preliminaries, finally came to the gist of the petition. "He humbly prays your excellency, in consideration of his eminent services in all these capacities, to augment the tax, to be paid him upon each body, male or female, by the sum of ten shillings; a measure which he thinks cannot fail to be gratifying to the dead, as manifesting a greater degree of respect for their remains, and——"

Here he was broken off, by the opening of the door and the entrance of a hussier, who commenced with a loud voice, "Her ladyship the Countess d'Ahlefeldt."

He was immediately followed by a woman of tall stature and fine figure, dressed in a robe of scarlet velvet, bordered with ermine, and fringed with gold; she had upon her head the coronet of a countess, and accepting the general's offer of a chair, seated herself beside him.

The age of the countess might have been fifty; but pride and ambition, as well as years, had deeply marked her countenance; she gave the old governor a haughty look, which she attempted to soften by a smile, the insincerity of which was apparent enough, in spite of her endeavors to conceal it."

"Well, general," she began, "your pupil makes us wait; he surely ought to be here by sundown."

"He has already been here, madam, and gone to Monckholm."

"Gone to Monckholm? Not to see Schumacker, I hope."

"I think it probable, that he has."

"What! the first visit Baron Thorvic makes, to *Schumacker*!"

"Why not, your ladyship? *Schumacker* is in bondage."

"And is the son of the viceroy then, intimate with a prisoner of state, general?"

"Frederic Guldenlew, when he intrusted his son to my charge, requested me to bring him up as I would my own. I have thought that the acquaintance of *Schumacker* would be of use to *Ordoner*, who will one day be a statesman himself. Consequently, with the consent of the viceroy, I procured for him a free pass to the prisons, which he uses at pleasure."

"And how long has Baron *Ordoner* enjoyed this useful acquaintance, I pray, noble general?" asked the countess.

"For more than a year, madam, and he seems much pleased with *Schumacker's* society; he passed most of his time with him when last at Drontheim, and it was only upon my express injunction, that he could be induced to relinquish it and depart upon his travels."

"And does *Schumacker* know, that he is the son of one of his greatest enemies?"

"No; he knows him only as a friend, and seeks to know nothing further."

"But, Monsieur General, were you aware, while you were encouraging this strange intimacy, that *Schumacker* had a daughter?"

"I was, my lady."

"And did this seem to you a matter of indifference, as it concerned your ward?"

"The pupil of Levin de Knud is a man of honor; *Ordoner* knows the barrier there is between him and *Schumacker's* daughter; he is incapable of seducing any girl, but, above all, he would never wrong the child of the unfortunate."

The countess blushed, and turned her head like a guilty thing, from the calm and keen gaze of the old general; "Well general," she said, at last, "I can only say, I think this is a most singular and imprudent liason; besides, there is a report that the miners are rising in the north, and that *Schumacker* is at the bottom of the plot."

"Your ladyship astonishes me," replied the general; "*Schumacker* has, for many years, borne his lot with perfect tranquillity; he is aged now and infirm; believe me, this is some groundless rumor."

At this moment the door opened, and the hussier announced a messenger from

the grand chancellor, who craved an audience of the countess.

The lady rose hastily, took leave of the governor, and while he returned to the consideration of his petitions, she hurried to the wing of the palace where her apartments were situated, to receive her husband's messenger.

She had been some minutes seated, with the ladies of her suite about her, when he entered. Upon his first appearance, an involuntary expression of disgust passed over the features of the countess, which she strove to hide, by a forced smile. Still there was nothing so repulsive in the exterior of the new comer; he was rather below than above the middle stature, of a full person, an open and somewhat handsome countenance, and evidently above the rank of a common courier. Upon a more close examination, however, the frankness of his expression would be found to approach very nearly to insolence, and there was a sinister and devilish look, which gleamed from time to time out of his laughing eyes, which almost startled you. He bowed profoundly to the countess, and on his knee presented her with a packet, bound round with a floss of silk, and sealed.

"Noble lady," said he, "condescend to allow me to lay at your feet, this communication from his grace, your husband, and my venerated master."

"Is he not coming himself? and why did he select you as a messenger?" asked the countess.

"The letter which I have had the honor to present, will inform your ladyship of the important affairs which detain his grace. For myself, by his orders I am obliged to ask the favor of a private interview with my honored mistress."

The countess grew pale, and faltered out, "With me, Musdamon?"

"I extremely regret it, if it is disagreeable to your ladyship; but such are my orders."

"Disagreeable!" replied the countess, forcing a smile, "oh no, certainly not—but is it necessary?"

The messenger inclined his head with deep reverence. "Absolutely necessary, madam, as your ladyship will perceive from a perusal of the letter you hold in your hand."

There was something singular in the agitated and trembling manner with which the haughty countess received this communication from the menial, who addressed her with such profound respect. In a

feeble voice she said to the ladies about her: "Leave us for a few moments."

"I trust your ladyship will pardon me," said the messenger, bending his knee, "for the trouble and inconvenience I am obliged to give you."

"It is no inconvenience, I assure you," replied the countess, striving in the presence of her retiring suite, to preserve the appearance of equanimity.

When the last had left the room, and the door was closed, Musdamon began:

"Elphaga, have you forgotten the time, when a meeting with me was your greatest happiness?"

Such were the terms in which the messenger addressed the countess, the moment they were alone; and the question was accompanied with a fiendish leer, such as the devil himself might display, when the last moment of his compact with some apostate soul had run out.

The humbled woman hid her face in her hands and murmured, "Would to heaven I could forget it."

"Fool! why should you blush? no one sees you?"

"God sees me——"

"God! you poor idiot!—why, you are not worthy to have deceived your husband: cuckold as he is, he is not superstitious."

"MUSDAMON, you are ungenerous to mock at my remorse."

"Why then do you mock at it yourself, by the daily commission of fresh crimes?"

The countess shuddered, but was silent.

"Come, Elphaga," continued the messenger, "no more of this; you must choose whether remorse shall kill you and your crime, or whether you will kill remorse by fresh crime; the second way is the best, at least, it is the gayest for the time, and it is my way."

"Do you think you will ever remember having said that in eternity," said the countess, in a low voice.

"Nonsense, my dear, let us have done with this stuff:" so saying, he drew near the countess, and throwing his arms around her neck, continued, "come Elphaga, try and imagine yourself only twenty years of age once more."

The unhappy lady, the slave as we have seen of her accomplice, was obliged to submit to, and return caresses which had long since become revolting to her; the vicious lover of her youth had become hateful in her eyes—the humble, and, alas! successful suitor of earlier days had become the coarse and brutal master of maturer years; the unlawful enjoyment of

the newly wedded bride had become the torture of the matron and the mother, and by a singular but just revolution of the affections, which Heaven controls for weal or woe, her very crime had become her punishment.

Extricating herself, as soon as possible, from his hateful embrace, the countess demanded of the messenger, "What verbal message her husband had sent?"

"D'Ahlefeldt," replied Musdamon, as soon as his power is confirmed by the marriage of Ordoner Guldenlew to our daughter—"

"Our daughter!" exclaimed the haughty countess, with an air of the most ineffable disdain.

"Why, yes," resumed the messenger, "I think Ulrica is quite as likely to be my daughter as his; but I do n't think he will be entirely satisfied with this marriage, unless, at the same time, old Schumacker is put out of the way. The ancient favorite is still an object of apprehension to him; he has powerful and secret friends near the person of the king; they are constantly at work in his behalf, and it was but a short time since, that his majesty, impatient at the delay which attends the negotiations between the chancellor and the Duke of Holstein, was heard to say—'*How much better Griffenfeldt used to manage these things.*' Besides this, a certain intriguer, by the name of Dispolsen, lately came to Copenhagen, from Munckholm, and it is supposed had a secret audience; the king sent to the chancery for the papers of the old minister. What Schumacker's object is, cannot exactly be ascertained, but for him to obtain his liberty would be to obtain power. He must die! die too by a sentence of court; and our present purpose is to fasten some capital offence upon him, so that he may be condemned and executed without delay. Your husband, Elphaga, under the pretence of a secret inspection of the northern provinces, is going, *incognito*, to ascertain the progress of a revolt among the miners which we have set on foot in the name of Schumacker. The revolt can hereafter be easily put down; but Schumacker, as its instigator, will perish. One thing gives us much anxiety, and that is, the loss of papers of the highest importance, which are said to be in the hands of Dispolsen: they contain the details of our plot, and have been stolen. We have had the land passes stopped, but if, as is said, Dispolsen embarked at Bergen to come by sea, our precautions will prove fruitless. There is a report that he has been assassinated, which

must be looked to; we are also in search of the famous brigand, Hans of Iceland, whom we wish to put at the head of this revolt of the miners. And now, my dear, what news have you to tell me? Our pretty bird at Munckholm, has she been taken in her cage yet? has she become the prey of the *golden falcon*, our son Frederic—yes or no?"

The pride of the countess again flashed up, "*Our son?*" she said haughtily.

"Let me see, how old is he?" asked the messenger quietly; "Ah, truly, twenty-four I think. Yes, *our son*! It is six and twenty years, Elphaga, since we were acquainted you know."

"God knows!" exclaimed the countess, "that Frederic is the legitimate heir of the chancellor."

"But the devil do n't. However, Frederic is not worth disputing about; he has not wit enough to be my son, all he is good for is to ruin a girl—has he made that out yet?"

"Indeed, I know not."

"Do endeavor, Elphaga, to take a more active part in our concerns. You see how much the count and I have to do. I must return to him to-morrow. Meanwhile pray for our sins, if you can do nothing else; the Italians you know are always especially devout when they are about to commit a murder. D'Ahlefeldt must make me a magnificent return for my services one day or other, or I am an injured man. Who ever filled more important offices than I do, about his person? his confidential servant, his wife's lover, his children's father, and instructor in all the devil's learning."

Here he was interrupted by one of the ladies, who entered to apprise them that it was midnight, which enabled the countess, to her great relief, to put an end to the interview.

"Will your grace condescend to allow me to pay my respects before my departure to-morrow?" said Musdamon, with a low reverence as he took his leave.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORDONER PRESSES THE OLD KEEPER INTO HIS SERVICE.

"UPON my honor, old man," said Ordoner, "I began to think I should have to wait for some of the dead to come and open the door for me."

"Pardon me, signior," replied Spiagudry, in whose ears the names of the king and the prince viceroy were still resounding. "I was very sound asleep."

"Then the dead must have been wide awake, certainly, and it was they whom I heard talking a few minutes since."

Spiagudry was alarmed: "You heard? you heard, seignior?" he stammered out.

"Yes to be sure, I heard voices; but no matter, I did not come here to meddle with your business, but to interest you in mine: open the gate."

Spiagudry, who had no mind that his guest should see the body of Gill Stadt, though his last remark had somewhat reassured him, permitted him to enter, as he could not well help so doing, and shut the door behind him.

"Benignus Spiagudry," he began, "is your humble servant, in all matters of science; though if, as I apprehend by your untimely call, you are in search of a sorcerer, or a magician, you have mistaken your man. *Ne famam credas*; give no heed to common report, she is a common liar. I am only a philosopher. Enter, seignior stranger, into my laboratory."

"No," replied Ordoner, "my business is with one of these bodies."

"The bodies, seignior?" exclaimed Spiagudry, "impossible! you cannot see them."

"Not see what is placed there expressly to be seen? Do n't tell me that, old man. I have some inquiries to make concerning one of these bodies, and you must answer them; so open the door without further delay, or I'll find means of making you."

Spiagudry resisted no longer; but fumbling among a bunch of keys, produced one which fitted the gate of the railing, and admitted the stranger into the section of the apartment where the bodies were.

"Show me the captain's clothes," said his visitor.

At this moment, the light of the lamp shone full upon the bloody, and half headless trunk of Gill Stadt.

"Just Heaven! what abominable profanation is this?" cried Ordoner.

"Great St. Hospice pity me," murmured he keeper.

"Old man," continued Ordoner, "is it possible that one so near the tomb, has no respect for its tenants? Have you no fear that the living will punish you for this outrage upon the dead? Know you not it is forbidden, under the severest penalties, to disfigure the bodies deposited in the spladgest?"

"Oh!" cried the keeper, "pardon me. Indeed it was not I. If you only knew." Here he recollected the parting injunctions of his late fearful visitant, "*be mute, be faithful*." "Did you not see some one escape through this aperture?" he inquired.

"Yes, was it your accomplice?"

"No, no! it was the guilty, the only one who was guilty of this deed; I swear it by all that is fearful in hell, all that is blessed in heaven." He threw himself at Ordoner's feet, and despite appearances, there was an air of truth in his appeal, which went far to convince his visitor of his innocence.

"Rise, old man," he said; "if you are not guilty, do not abase your gray hairs by kneeling to me."

The keeper arose.

"What is the name of the criminal?" asked Ordoner.

"Oh! ask not, noble seignior," replied the old man, "ask me not!" and he repeated to himself, I will '*be mute, be faithful*.'

Ordoner repeated the question.

"In Heaven's name, do not ask seignior, for the love of God, for the fear of——"

"Fear will not hinder me from asking, but you shall have cause to fear if you do not answer."

"Pardon me, pardon me young master. Indeed I cannot."

"You can and you shall! Now tell me the name of this sacrilegious brute."

Spiagudry still sought to evade the question. "Well," said he, at last, "he who disfigured this body, is the assassin of this officer."

"The officer was assassinated, then?" inquired Ordoner, his attention brought back to the original object of his inquiry.

"Most certainly, he was."

"And by whom? by whom?"

"In the name of the saint whom your mother called on when she brought you forth, I conjure you not to ask me!"

"If I had no other reason for inquiring than the anxiety you show to conceal it, I should insist upon knowing. Tell me the name of the murderer!"

"Look here, then," said Spiagudry, exposing the naked, and lately washed body of the officer. "Do you see these long deep trenches, torn, as if with sharp claws, upon the body and limbs of this man? This will explain to you, who did the deed."

"What!" replied Ordoner, "was he killed by a wild beast?"

"No, seignior."

"It must have been the devil, then, who did the deed."

"Hush, seignior! Who knows how close you may have guessed. Did you never hear," the keeper continued, of a man, or a monster, in human form, who has hands and claws of iron, like Ashteroth of old, or like Antichrist, who is to come?"

"Explain yourself."

"Cursed," says the Apocalypse——"

"Nonsense—give me the name of the assassin."

"Now, for my sake—for your own sake——"

"That is enough; for my own sake I will know, come what may. Tell me, at once, and waste no more time."

"Well," said Spiagudry at length, "if you will know, young man, the name of this murderer and robber of the dead, is—Hans of Iceland!"

Ordoner was by no means ignorant of this terrible name. "Ah!" he exclaimed; "is this too, the work of that execrable bandit!"

"Call him not bandit, master, for he has no companion."

"Well, wretch, what community of crime then, is there between you and him?"

"Oh, my noble master, do not believe in appearances. The oak is not poisonous because the serpent coils among its roots."

"Do not seek to deceive me, such a being can have no friend but an accomplice."

"I am not his friend, seignior, still less, his accomplice. Deign to observe, that this outrage which has been committed, will probably be discovered in twenty-four hours, and I shall be exposed to punishment. Hence my agitation and distress, though innocent."

This consideration, urged as it was, in the most pathetic tones, went far to allay the suspicions of Ordoner. He paused for a moment, and then addressing Spiagudry, who looked upon him with an anxious and troubled air, he said, in a calm and severe tone.

"Now, old man, answer me truly; did you find any papers upon the body of this officer?"

"None—upon my honor."

"Do you know whether Hans of Iceland found any?"

"I swear to you by Saint Hospice, that I know not."

"You do not know! Do you know where Hans conceals himself?"

"He never conceals himself—he is everywhere."

"Well, where are his retreats, his haunts?"

"The Pagan has as many haunts as the island of Hittern has caves, as the star Sirius has rays."

"Again, I insist that you answer me, without figure of speech. It is plain, that there is some mysterious connection between you and this brigand, and yet you say you are not his accomplice. Now if

you know him, you doubtless know where he is to be found. Listen, and do not interrupt me. If you are not his accomplice, you will not hesitate to conduct me to his retreat."

Spiagudry could no longer restrain his terror: he burst forth into an exclamation of dismay:

"My God, seignior! and will you in the flower of your youth—in the very brightest of your days—seek this fearful demoniac, to become his prey! When Ingiald of the four arms, fought with the giant Myctolm, he had four arms——"

"Well," interrupted Ordoner, with a smile, "if I take you with me, we shall have four arms."

"Now you are mocking at the poor old man, who will need help rather than be able to afford it."

"Listen to me, and interrupt me no more with your trifling. If this sacrilege—of which I would fain believe you innocent—exposes you to punishment, you cannot stay here. I offer my protection, provided you will guide me to the retreat of this monster. If I find him, dead or alive I bring him hither; then you can prove your innocence; and I pledge myself, that you shall be reinstated in your office. In the mean time," he added, holding out a heavy purse; "here is more money than you would make in a year by staying at home."

Ordoner had carefully watched the effect of his logical address upon the old keeper, and retaining the purse as the decisive argument, he produced it just in time to decide the question in the mind of Spiagudry.

He commenced by taking the purse. "Noble sir," he began as soon as the traits of indecision had disappeared from his eye and mouth—"noble sir, if I follow you I may fall into the hands of this demon. If I remain here, I shall be given over to Nichol Orugix, the hangman, to-morrow. What is the punishment for sacrilege—I forget? But no matter. In either case, my poor life is in danger. The sage, Samond Sigferpow, advises us, when exposed to two dangers, to choose the least imminent—so I will follow you. Yes, seignior, I will be your guide; but pray remember, that I have done my best to dissuade you from your perilous undertaking."

"Never trouble yourself about that. All I ask of you, is to be my guide, and to be faithful."

"The honor of Spiagudry, seignior, is as pure and bright as the gold your bounty has just bestowed upon him."

"See that it continue so; and recollect

that I carry steel as well as gold. Where do you think Hans of Iceland is, at present?"

"Most probably on his way to Walderhog, or the lake of Smiasen. Our route should be through Skongen."

"When will you be ready to start?"

"To-morrow even, as soon as the spladgest is closed. I will find some means of concealing the body of the miner through the day."

"Where shall I meet you?"

"In the grand square, near the statue of justice, which was formerly the image of the goddess Freya. The latter will doubtless take me under her protection, in gratitude for the beautiful devil which I carved on her pedestal."

"Well, then, all is settled."

"All," replied the old man.

At this moment, a low murmur, or growl was heard near them.

"What's that?" cried the frightened keeper.

"Is there no one lives here, with you?" asked Ordoner.

"Oh, yes! It's my helper, Oglypiglap," replied the keeper, who became reassured by the explanation. "A sleeping Laplander, according to the Bishop Arngrim, makes as much noise as a waking woman."

So saying, he conducted Ordoner to the door of the spladgest, when he bade him farewell, and begged him, when he passed the altar of Saint Hospice, to repeat a prayer for the soul of his poor servant, Benignus Spiagudry.

When his guest was gone, Spiagudry betook himself to the task of so placing the body of the miner, that its mutilation could not readily be perceived.

There were a variety of other reasons besides those assigned by Ordoner, and adopted by the old keeper, which induced him to embark in this perilous adventure. First, his hatred for Hans was almost as great as his fear; and he placed much reliance upon his own sagacity in enabling him in any event to keep out of his way. His love for science was intense, and the journey offered great opportunities for botanical and mineralogical research. His love of gold was still greater, and he was anxious to ascertain how many purses the young adventurer had remaining; besides which, in the possible case of success, had he not in his hands the casket, full of treasure, intrusted to him by Hans, which he would not then be under the necessity of parting with? A final reason was, that he hoped soon to return to the place which he

was leaving; "And then," said he to himself, "whatever comes of the encounter between this young lord and Hans, one of them must perish, and I shall have, at least, one body more."

Again the same low growl was heard, and again the keeper was startled. "That cannot be Oglypiglap," he exclaimed; "that noise came from without." He listened again for a moment, but heard nothing. "I'm a fool," said he to himself; "it must be the wind;" and having finished with the body of the miner, he betook himself to his bed, in order to prepare for the coming fatigues of the morrow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY OF HANS OF ICELAND—ORDONER GOES IN SEARCH OF HIM.

THE signal light was extinguished at the fortress of Monckholm, and in its place, the mariner entering the gulf beheld the bright helmet of the centinel shining like a star, in the beams of the rising sun; when old Schumacker, leaning upon the arm of his daughter, descended into the circular garden which surrounded the donjon, to take his morning's walk. The rest of both father and daughter had been broken; that of the first, by anxiety and watchfulness, that of the latter, by gay and cheerful dreams. The old man looked upon the beaming face of his child, and said, with a melancholy expression:

"You must be happy, my Ethel. You both blush and smile. You have nothing, I know, to blush for, and your smile must arise from the anticipation of some coming pleasure."

Ethel blushed still more, and ceased to smile.

"Father," she said with some confusion, "I've brought down the Edda. Shall I read to you?"

"If you will, my daughter," replied Schumacker, and immediately relapsed into his accustomed reverie. He seated himself upon a rock, overshadowed by a gloomy pine, and listened to the silver voice of his daughter, without attending to what she read, as the worn-out traveller is lulled by the murmuring of the brook by which he reposes.

Ethel read the story of a shepherdess, who would not wed a king until he had proved himself a warrior of renown. Regner Lodbrog obtained not the hand of the shepherdess, until he had conquered the brigand Ingolphe, the exterminator.

Suddenly the reader was interrupted,

and Schumacker, aroused from his meditations by a rustling of the foliage; and Ethel cast her eyes upon the ground, as she perceived her unceasing tormentor, the gay Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt, emerge from behind the shrubbery.

"Ah!" cried the lieutenant, "did I hear the name of Ingolphe, the exterminator, from your charming mouth? I suppose you had been talking of his descendant, Hans, and that led you to speak of him. Ladies are always fond of brigands; and there is something in the story of Ingolphe and his descendants very frightful and very interesting too. The exterminator had but one son, born of a sorceress; and he also had but one, by a bride of similar character; and thus the race has been perpetuated for four generations, for the desolation of Iceland. And so it happens, that at the present day, the fiendish spirit and evil power of Ingolphe, has descended unscathed to the famous Hans, who doubtless at present occupies the thoughts of Mademoiselle Schumacker."

The officer paused for a moment. Ethel was silent, from embarrassment; Schumacker from disgust—but the lieutenant, flattering himself that they said nothing, because they wished to hear more, rattled on:

"The brigand of Klipstader, has no other passion but hatred to men, no other occupation but to destroy them——"

"He is wise," interrupted Schumacker.

"He lives in perfect solitude——"

"He is happy," continued the old man.

The lieutenant was charmed with these interruptions; they seemed like the first approach of conversation. He proceeded:

"Heaven preserve us from such wisdom and happiness, and cursed be the wind which blew Hans of Iceland hither. I know not that I should say that, however, for I believe we are indebted for him to a bishop. The story is, that some Iceland peasants found this strange being when an infant. They were about to kill him, when the good bishop of Scabolt prevented them, and took him under his protection, with the pious hope of making a Christian of the devil. His reverence employed every means to develop his fiendship's intellect, and well he was repaid; for no sooner had he arrived at boyhood, than he constructed him a boat from the trunk of a tree, and after setting fire to the palace of his benefactor, took his departure by the light of the burning. In this way, it is said, he came to Norway, which now boasts in his person, the very perfection of a monster. Since his arrival, the mines of Færø have

been destroyed, and three hundred workmen crushed. The rock which overhung Golyn, has been displaced and fell upon the village; the bridge of Half Brøn has been undermined, and sunk with hundreds of travellers. The cathedral of Drontheim has been set on fire; false lights have been shown in stormy nights on the rocky coasts, while the lakes of Smiasen and Sparbo, the caves of Kyllass and Walderhog, and the gorges of Dorfirefield, conceal unnumbered victims of murder and outrage. The old women say, that for every fresh crime a new hair is added to the beard of this Arimanes of Drontheim; and if this be true, he should by this time equal the magi of the east in his hairy honors. Your pretty ladyship should also know, that every effort has been made by the government to seize this execrable——"

Schumacker once more interrupted him.

"Yes; and every effort has been ineffectual. I congratulate the high chancellor on the efficiency of his police."

The officer did not understand the irony so palpable in this remark, but continued:

"Hans has proved as invincible as was Horatius Cockles of old. Troops of every class, veterans, and young soldiers, countrymen, mountaineers, and sailors, all fall before him. He can neither be avoided nor captured; and the best that can befall those who go in search of him, is not to find him. You are, perhaps, surprised, fair lady, at the extent of my information upon this subject; but I can assure you, that it was not without an object that I acquired it. It struck me, that the story of this Hans might easily be converted into a capital romance, after the style of Madame de Scudery, whose *Clælie* I am now reading, in six volumes. True it is, that it would be necessary to soften our climate, and modify some of our barbarous names—for instance, Drontheim we might call *Durtiniamm*; its rude forests we would convert into beautiful groves; its mountain torrents into meandering rivulets; its dark and gloomy caves into brilliant grottoes, embellished with crystal, and precious stones and gold. In one of these grottoes should live Hannas de Thue, (as we would call Hans of Iceland,) a celebrated enchanter, descended in a direct line from the god Mars. There is nothing classical in the name of Ingolphe, the exterminator, you know. Hannas, after having been educated by the great Pontiff of Thule, should make his escape, in a car, drawn by two dragons. There would be nothing picturesque in his passage on the trunk of a tree, you know. Arrived at Drontheim, or Dur

tiniaum, and delighted by the beauty of its climate, and the fertility of its soil, he chooses it as the place of his abode, and the theatre of his crimes. Then a very interesting picture might be drawn of his robberies and murders; then a love episode might be introduced, to mitigate the horrors which surrounded him. The shepherdess, Alcyppe, walking one day with her lambs, should attract the attention of the giant, (for he must be a giant, you know;) the giant becomes enamored. But the shepherdess loves an officer of the militia. The officer and the giant become jealous of each other, &c. You can imagine how interesting it would be. I'll bet my cracovienne boots against a pair of ladies' patens, that this, put in the hands of Madame de Scudery, would make a work which would set all Copenhagen agog for weeks."

The mention of Copenhagen aroused the attention of Schumacker.

"What news is there from Copenhagen, seignior officer?" he cried hastily.

"Faith," returned the other, "none that I know of, except that the royal assent has been given to the marriage, which is at present the great topic of conversation in the two kingdoms."

"What marriage?" asked Schumacker.

The addition of a fourth person to their party interrupted the lieutenant, just as he was about to answer this question. All looked up; the sombre countenance of the prisoner grew cheerful; the lieutenant's frivolity and affectation of manner vanished, and the beautiful features of Ethel once more beamed with joy, as she greeted the new-comer. It was Ordoner.

There was a peculiarity in the meeting of Ordoner with these three persons which made it naturally embarrassing: with each of them he had a separate secret, unknown to either of the others. Neither Schumacker nor Ethel were surprised at his return, but the lieutenant was; and his presence was equally unaccountable to Ordoner, who would have feared least his vanity and indiscretion should have betrayed their appointment, had that not been so gross a breach of etiquette, that it was impossible for any one pretending to be a gentleman to be guilty of it.

Each of these four personages had so much to say in private, that while together they could not utter a word; and thus it happened, that what with anxiety for separate communion and the embarrassment attendant thereupon, Ordoner's reception was entirely mute.

The lieutenant first broke the charm with a burst of laughter.

"By the train of the royal mantle," he cried, "my dear fellow, here's a scene not unlike that which was presented, when the senators of Gaul received the Roman Brennus; or was it the Roman senators who received the general of the Gauls?—'pon my honor, I forget; but no matter, you are just in time to help me to enlighten this old gentleman, as to what is going on in the outer world. As you entered, I was just telling him about this great marriage, which is the sole topic of conversation at present between the Medes and Persians.

"What marriage?" asked, at the same time, Ordoner and Schumacker.

"I thought, seignior stranger," cried the lieutenant—"I thought, by the fashion of your dress, that you came from some other world; and this question convinces me that I am right; doubtless you alighted on the banks of the Nidder from a car drawn by winged griffins. You certainly could not have passed through Norway without hearing of the coming marriage, between the son of the viceroy and the daughter of the high chancellor."

Schumacker turned toward the lieutenant.

"What!" said he; "Ordoner Guldenlew marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt? The son of the Viceroy Frederic must now be about two-and-twenty-years of age. I recollect I had been in this fortress just a year when I heard of his birth. He marries young, and he is right; for when his misfortunes come upon him, no one will be able to accuse him of aspiring to be a cardinal."

Here he alluded to one of the charges which had been brought against himself; but the lieutenant did not take his meaning, for he immediately responded, with renewed laughter,

"Oh, no! not a cardinal; but they are going to make him a count, a colonel, and a chevalier of the order of the Elephant, which is much better."

"Much better!" repeated Schumacker, quietly, to which he added, after a pause, in which his own disgrace seemed to have arisen up before him; "and then, by and by, they will break his collar of the Elephant, reverse his coronet, and tear off his epaulettes."

"Would it not be well, my friend," inquired Ordoner, taking the old man by the hand, "to wait till he whom you esteem your enemy receives all these honors, before you prognosticate their loss?"

"Oh, don't heed him," said the lieutenant; "what matters the old man's good or ill will to the Baron Thorvic?"

"More than you are aware, perhaps, Mr. Lieutenant," replied Ordoner. "And further," continued he, after a pause, "I can tell you, that this grand marriage is, by no means, so certain a thing as you suppose!"

"*Fiat quod vis*—Thy will be done," responded the lieutenant, with a bow of mock reverence. "The king, the viceroy, and the high chancellor have decided upon and made preparation for this union. It is their will and pleasure that it takes place. All this is true; but it is not agreeable to the seignior stranger; and what are the king, and viceroy, and high chancellor?"

"You may have hit nearer the truth, than you either thought or intended," observed Ordoner, quietly.

"Now, 'pon my honor, that is too good!" exclaimed the lieutenant, throwing himself back, in a fit of uncontrollable laughter. "I do wish the Baron Thorvic was here to listen to a soothsayer, who seems so deeply read in his future destiny. But, my learned prophet, you should let your beard grow—it is by no means worthy of your pretensions."

"Seignior Lieutenant," replied Ordoner, coolly, "I make no pretensions to what I do not understand; but I think I know enough of Ordoner Guldenlew to say, that he will not marry where he does not love."

"Ah, ha! there you come with your ethics; but who told you, seignior Greenmantle, that the baron did not love Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt?"

"Allow me to ask you, seignior, who told you that he did?"

Here the lieutenant, as was not unusually the case with him, found himself completely cornered, and was obliged to extricate himself by fibbing.

"Who told me he loved her, did you say? What a silly question. I don't think much of your powers of divination, after all. Why, man, the whole world knows that this match is as much an affair of the heart as of convenience."

"You'll except me, at least," observed Ordoner, gravely.

"Except you? So be it. But you cannot help the viceroy's son loving the daughter of the high chancellor."

"Loving her?"

"Yes; loving her to distraction?"

"He would be distracted, indeed, if he did love her."

"Hallo! Do n't forget who you are speaking to. Really, one would suppose the son of the viceroy was obliged to consult you, before he could fall in love."

So saying, the officer rose; and Ethel,

who observed that the parties were becoming excited, placed herself between them, and addressing Ordoner, said, in a soothing tone, "Pray, drop the subject; do not reply to him. What is it to us, whether the son of the viceroy love the daughter of the chancellor or not?"

The touch of her hand and her gentle voice, instantly recalled Ordoner to himself; and looking upon her, he forgot the lieutenant, who, having already regained his equanimity, was saying, "With what grace mademoiselle enacts the part of a Sabine lady, mediating between her husband and her father. I was hasty," he continued, addressing Ordoner. "I forgot that there was a pact between us that may not be broken. Your hand, chevalier. You will admit, also, that you forgot you were speaking of the viceroy's son, to his future brother-in-law, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt."

At this name, Schumacker, who had hitherto been an indifferent, or at most, an impatient spectator of the dispute, sprang from his seat with a paroxysm of rage.

"D'Ahlefeldt!—a d'Ahlefeldt here?" he exclaimed, "serpent!—and I did not recognize the execrable father in the son! What brings you here? I was not condemned to the punishment of your society. Let me, at least, enjoy my dungeon in peace. It needs but one more—the son of Guldenlew. You were wishing for him, a while ago. Why did you not bring him with you? Traitors! cowards! Will nothing serve you, but the sight of my suffering—my madness—my disgrace? Begone! d'Ahlefeldt!—son of a cursed, cursed race!"

The officer, abashed at the first burst of the old man's denunciation, soon recovered himself, and in turn, gave vent to his anger:

"Silence!" he cried, "audacious madman! Will you have done with your hellish litany?"

"No, no!" retorted Schumacker. "Bear with me a moment longer; take with you my curse—my bitterest curse upon you, and the house of Guldenlew, with whom you are about to be allied."

"Pardieu!" ejaculated the officer. "This is redoubling the outrage!"

Ordoner restrained the lieutenant, who was beside himself with rage.

"Recollect," he said quietly, "that your enemy is an aged man. Besides, we already have an appointment together, and when we meet, if you wish, I will also tender you satisfaction on his account as well as my own."

"Be it so," replied the lieutenant. "We

now double the stakes, and the combat shall be *a la outrance*; for I have my brother-in-law's honor to avenge as well as my own. In taking up my glove, you take up that of Ordoner Guldenlew."

"Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt, you manifest your generosity in taking the part of the absent. Show as much toward this unfortunate old man, whose sufferings have rendered him unjust."

D'Ahlefeldt was one who was capable of being excited to magnanimity by judicious commendation. He grasped the hand which Ordoner extended to him, and approached Schumacker, who, overcome by the violence of his emotions, had sunk back into his seat, and was supported by his daughter.

"Seignior," said he, respectfully, "you have abused the privilege of your age; and I might, perhaps, have abused the advantage my youth gave me, had not a champion stood forth to protect you. I entered your prison, this morning for the last time, to announce to you, that hereafter, by the especial order of the viceroy, you would be relieved from the presence of guards in the donjon. Will you deign to receive this intelligence from the mouth of an enemy?"

"Begone!" muttered the old man.

The lieutenant bowed and obeyed, secretly gratified at having acquired the approbation of Ordoner.

Schumacker remained for some time with his head down, and his arms crossed. Looking up, at length, he saw Ordoner standing in silence before him.

"Well?" said he.

"Seignior count, Dispolson was assassinated—"

The head of the old man again dropped upon his breast, and Ordoner continued.

"His assassin was the notorious brigand, Hans of Iceland."

"Hans of Iceland!" exclaimed both father and daughter.

"He robbed the captain," continued Ordoner.

"And you was unable to find the steel casket secured with the arms of Griffenfeldt?"

"I was, seignior."

Schumacker hid his face in his hands.

"But I will recover it for you, yet, seignior count—rely upon me. The murder was committed yesterday morning. Hans has fled toward the north. I have procured a guide, who knows his haunts, and I myself am well acquainted with the mountains of Drontheimus. I will take him."

Ethel grew deadly pale. Schumacker rose. A glance of hope shot across his

features. He looked as if he had discovered that there was yet some virtue left in man.

"Noble Ordoner!" he exclaimed, lifting his hands and eyes to Heaven: "God bless you. Adieu!" And he disappeared behind the shrubbery.

Ordoner gazed for a moment after him, and then turned to Ethel, who was lying half fainting upon the rock where she had supported her father—her white skin contrasting with the dark ground, upon which she reclined, like a figure of alabaster on a pedestal of blackest marble.

"Great heavens! dear Ethel," cried Ordoner, as he raised her trembling form—"what agitates you thus?"

"Oh!" replied the poor girl, with a faltering voice, "if you have the least—I will not say love—but pity for me; if you have not altogether deceived me; if you did not come to our prison to kill me;—Ordoner, dear Ordoner, I entreat you, in the name of God and his holy angels, give up this mad, this fearful undertaking!—" Here her voice was broken with sobs and tears, but as soon as she could command it, she continued, "Yes, my own dear Ordoner, for my sake, make this sacrifice. Do not attempt to follow this demon to his hold. What object can you have, in encountering such frightful perils? Tell me, is there some one dearer than her, whom you but yesterday called your own—your wife?" Her words again choked by tears, she clung with both arms around his neck, and plead with her eyes, when her tongue could no longer serve her.

"Ethel, my beloved," replied Ordoner, "you alarm yourself without cause. God ever sustains those whose endeavors are just; and is it not for your sake that I go? That casket of steel—"

"For my sake, Ordoner? What is all the world to me, in comparison with your life? And should you perish, what will become of me?"

"But why do you think I shall perish, Ethel?"

"Ah! you know not Hans, this robber-fiend. You know not the monster whom you seek. Have you never heard that he is leagued with the powers of darkness?—that he overwhelms whole villages by avalanches from the mountains?—that he destroys the miners by hundreds in their mines?—that he extinguishes the beacons on the stormy coasts, and strews the shores with wrecks and the corpses of the mariners? Ordoner, he is a giant, and aided by the fiend himself. Can you, then, with-

stand him, with your single arm and sword?"

"And your prayers, and the thought that I combat but for you? Yes! Ethel my love, rely upon it, that his terrors are greatly exaggerated. He is but a man like all others, and he will continue to waste and kill, until he is destroyed himself."

"And will you not heed me then? are my entreaties of no avail? Will you leave me to my fate, and wander away for what purpose I know not, and throw away your life which you have already sworn was mine? I assure you, dearest Ordener, you deceive yourself; this is not a man, whom you seek. Know you not, that thousands have gone and been sent in search of him, but none have ever returned? Ask in the garrison? ask at the government house? If you will not believe me, others may convince you, and deter you from your desperate undertaking."

The prayers and entreaties of Ethel, might, perhaps, have prevailed with her lover, if he had not already gone so far; but when he recollected the despairing look, with which Schumacker had seen him depart on the evening before, his resolution was confirmed, past all power of change.

"I might deceive you, dear Ethel," he replied, "and yet accomplish my purpose, but I will not, even for the sake of pacifying you; no, I feel that I ought not to hesitate between your tears and your welfare—not only your fortune, but your happiness, nay your life is at stake."

"And what is that to me? you are my all, my happiness, my life, for life without you would have no charms for me."

"But, Ethel, your father's life is also involved in my success."

"My father's life!" she repeated, in a low and faltering voice.

"Yes, Ethel. This brigand, employed doubtless by the enemies of Count Griffenfeldt, has possessed himself of some papers, the loss of which will bring destruction upon you and him. I will regain them at the hazard of my life."

Ethel remained silent and motionless, for a few moments; the tears trickled fast down her cheeks, her bosom heaved slowly and with pain; and when at last she raised her eyes, it was with the expression which the countenance of the condemned exhibits, when he looks up at the fatal axe.

"For my father's sake," she murmured at last, "do what you will; but it will be in vain."

"Generous girl," exclaimed Ordener,

pressing her to his breast, "fear not, I shall soon return; I ought to save your father's life, to make me worthy to become his son, my own dear Ethel."

"Go, my Ordener, and if you never return, I have one consolation: despair is mortal."

They rose, and, arm in arm, in silence traversed the garden path, until they reached the postern gate, which communicated with the outer fortress. Here Ethel stopped and with her scissors cut a lock from her jet-black hair.

"Take this Ordener," she said, "it will be happier than me, for it will accompany you;" (he pressed it to his lips) "think of me, Ordener, and I will pray for you—perhaps my prayers may avail more with God, than your sword will against the demon."

One last, long and thrilling embrace, and with hearts too full for speech, they parted.

CHAPTER X.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

THE Countess d'Ahlefeldt passed from a sleepless night, to an anxious day; reclining upon her sofa, the recollection of yesterday's occurrences—its crimes, without enjoyment, and its remorse, without alleviation, filled her mind with horror and disgust; she thought of Musdamon, once the object of her fond, though guilty attachment, now, viewed alone as the author of her deepest misery. She wept—this wretched woman wept, tears not of repentance, but of regret; she mourned not that she had been deceived, but that she could be deceived no longer; but such repentance brings no healing with its coming. Suddenly the door opened; the countess started up in anger, for she had directed that she should not be disturbed. Her irritation was speedily turned to fright, when she perceived Musdamon enter, and that, in its turn, was as quickly allayed, when she saw that he was followed by her son.

"Ah, mother!" exclaimed the lieutenant; "how came you here? I thought you were at Berghen. How you gay ladies have taken to gadding about?"

The countess received Frederic with the warmest manifestations of affection, which he, like all favorites, replied to with great indifference. His treatment was, perhaps, one of the severest punishments of this unhappy woman. Frederic was her best beloved, and, in fact, the only being in the world for whom she felt a

purser and disinterested attachment. It often happens, that a vicious woman, who has lost all care or regard for her husband, preserves in all their force and purity, her maternal feelings and solicitude.

"So you came to see me, the moment you heard I was in Drontheim, my son."

"No, indeed, not I—I was tired of the fortress, so I came to the city; here I happened to fall in with Musdamon, and he brought me to see you."

The poor mother sighed deeply.

"By the way, mother," continued this dutiful son, "you can tell me, if rose-colored ribbons are still worn at the knee, in Copenhagen. Did you think to bring me a bottle of the oil of Juvence, which is used to whiten the hands? you did not forget the last romance, I trust, nor those little articles for the toilet which I sent to you for?"

The poor woman had brought him nothing but her ill-requited affection; "My son," said she, "I have been sick, and my illness caused me to forget your commissions."

"Sick, have you? well, you are better now, I suppose. By the way, how do my brace of Normau dogs come on? I'll bet that my monkey has not been bathed in rose-water daily, as I directed, and I doubt not, I shall find my Bilboa parrot dead, when I return; nobody takes care of my pets, when I am gone."

"Your mother cares for you, at least, my son," replied the countess, in a voice of affection.

Musdamon stood laughing in a corner of the apartment; "Seignior Frederic," said he, "I see that the steel sword has not rusted in its iron scabbard; you have not lost all recollection of the gayeties of Copenhagen, since you have been cooped up here; but, allow me to ask, of what use will be your oil of Juvence, your rose-colored ribbons, and all your little toilet preparations for a siege, if you have found that the virgin fortress at Monekholm, is impregnable."

"Pou my honor, you are right, and it is impregnable; were it otherwise, I should have captured it long ago; but how can you surprise a fortress, when every post is guarded! Mademoiselle's very style of dress, is sufficient to satisfy one of her character; but for her face and hands, the only parts she leaves exposed, I should not know but she was as black as the Empress of Mauritania: believe me, no such citadel can be stormed, when modesty commands the garrison."

"Really!" replied, Musdamon, "now I

should suppose that modesty might be forced to capitulate, if love would but make a vigorous assault, instead of spending his time in show and parade."

"Mistaken, again; love is already installed in the place, and reinforces modesty in every case."

"Ah! seignior Frederic, that is news; so she loves you?"

"Who said she loved me?"

"Who else does she love, then?" exclaimed both the countess and Musdamon, the former of whom had hitherto listened in silence, but who was unpleasantly reminded of Ordener's visit to Monckholm by the lieutenant's last remark.

Frederic was on the point of giving them, in reply, a piquant description of the nocturnal interview which he had interrupted, when he chanced to recollect that so to do would be a breach of confidence and of etiquette; his vivacity was at once converted into embarrassment, and he stammered out,

"Faith! I do n't know; how should I? Some rustic, I suppose, or some retainer of——"

"Some soldier of the garrison, probably," exclaimed Musdamon, with a laugh.

"My son," said the countess, "are you sure it is with some rustic—some low person—that she is in love? Oh! I hope it may be so!"

"Sure? certainly I'm sure; but it is not with any soldier of the garrison," added the lieutenant, a little piqued at Musdamon's suggestion. "I'm sure enough, at all events, mother, to ask to be relieved from further duty at that infernal castle."

The countenance of the countess brightened, when she heard of the low attachment of the young girl. Ordener Guldenlew's visit had begun to excite some disagreeable apprehensions in her mind, but now she attributed it to a desire to see her son.

"You must tell us, Frederic, all about the amours of Ethel Schumacker. I do not wonder that a low-born girl should give the preference to a low-born lover. Still you owe the castle some gratitude, inasmuch as your residence there has procured for you the honor of the first advances, from a certain personage of no mean consideration."

"What do you mean, mother?" said Frederic, with an air of surprise—"what personage are you speaking of?"

"You may spare your jesting, my son; did you not receive a visit yesterday? You see I know all about it!"

"Much better than I do, faith! The

devil a face did I see yesterday, except those on the cornices of the old towers at Monckholm."

"What! Frederic! did no one visit you?"

"No one, upon my word!"

"In so saying, Frederic felt himself bound to keep silence in regard to his future antagonist; besides which, he did not, in fact, consider him as any one worth mentioning.

"Is it possible!" resumed his mother, that the son of the viceroy did not visit Monckholm last evening?"

The lieutenant laughed. "Why, mother, you must be dreaming, or are you jesting with me?"

"Neither one nor the other, my son; whose guard was it last night?"

"My own!"

"And you did not see the Baron Ordoner?"

"Not I!" replied the lieutenant.

"But recollect, my son, may he not have entered incognito? You do not know him personally—he having been brought up here, at Drontheim, while you were educated at Copenhagen. Then, they say, he is very eccentric and odd in his habits. And you are certain you saw no one?"

Frederic hesitated for a moment, but again insisted that he had seen no one, and that was all he could say.

"Then the baron could not have gone to Monckholm," remarked the countess.

"Here Musdamon, who had been an attentive listener, and was as much surprised as Frederic, interrupted her:

"With your permission, lady, let me ask seignior Frederic the name of this retainer, to whom the daughter of Schmacker is attached?" He repeated his question, for Frederic was apparently in a fit of reverie, and did not hear him.

"I do n't know—that is—no, I do n't know!"

"Permit me to ask, then, seignior, how you know that he is a retainer or vassal?"

"Did I say so?—yes—well he is a retainer."

The lieutenant's embarrassment—these interrogations—the ideas they gave rise to—the necessity of observing silence upon one point—all annoyed him, until he could endure it no longer.

"Upon my word, Musdamon, you and my lady mother seem very much in the humor of asking questions this morning; so I shall leave you to cross-examine each other, for the devil another answer do you get from me." So saying he left the room, and made the best of his way to the court-

yard, where he mounted his horse and rode off at full speed, for he already heard Musdamon call after him.

The countess and her paramour remained perfectly bewildered in conjecture, while the lieutenant, on his way to embark for Monckholm, indulged in a train of reflection like the following:

"If this was Ordoner Guldenlew, what will become of poor Ulrica? But no, it is impossible that he should prefer the daughter of a wretched prisoner, to the heiress of the prime minister of the realm. After all, perhaps his love for Schmacker's daughter is merely a transient passion—a fancy. A man may have a wife and a mistress too; there is no harm in that; it's all the fashion. But it cannot be him; the viceroy's son would never dress so. This fellow had an old black plume in his hat, with no buckle; a mantle big enough for a tent; his hair in disorder, and without curls; dirty boots and steel spurs. Oh! it never could have been him. Besides, the Baron of Thorvic is a chevalier of the order of Dannebrog, and this stranger wore no order. I'm sure if I was a chevalier of Dannebrog, I should wear the collar to bed with me. And then, again, he has never read Clælie;—oh! it cannot be the son of the viceroy."

CHAPTER XI.

THE OLD SOLDIER AND HIS PUPIL.

"WELL, Paul, is that you? who sent you here?"

"Your excellency forgets that I came by your orders."

"True—true!" said the general, with an absent air; "I wanted you to give me that chart."

Paul handed the governor the chart, which was, indeed, already within reach of his arm, if he had chose to have stretched it out.

His excellency laid down the chart, mechanically, without ever looking at it, and busied himself in folding some papers.

"Paul, I wanted to ask you—What o'clock is it?"

"Six o'clock, in the morning," replied the valet, to the general, whose watch lay on the table before him.

"I was going to say to you, Paul—What's the news this morning?"

"Nothing, please your excellency, except that my noble master, about whom your excellency appears to be so uneasy, has not returned yet."

The general raised his eyes from the

table and looking at Paul, with a shade of displeasure, said :

"I uneasy about Ordoner ? no such thing ! your eyes are at fault, master Paul. I know what keeps him, and I do n't expect him yet."

So jealous was the general of his authority, that he would have been highly exasperated, had he supposed that any one had divined his thoughts, or imagined that he was not privy to the cause of Ordoner's absence.

"Paul," he continued, "you may retire."

The valet left the chamber.

"Really," soliloquized the general, "Ordoner both uses and abuses me. An over-bent blade may break. To give me a sleepless night, expose me to the sarcasms of my lady chancelloress, and the impertinent observations of a valet—me ! General Levin—and all this that he may pay his respects to an old enemy before he does to an old friend ! Oh, Ordoner ! Ordoner ! your caprices will be the death of your old father, one day or other. If he does not come soon I shall explode like a cask of gunpowder. To expose the governor of Drontheim to the sarcasms of this she-chancellor and the impertinent observations of a valet ! Where the devil is the——?"

While the general was thus working himself into a passion, and shuffling over his papers, he was interrupted by the sound of a well-known voice, which called out in clear and hearty tones, "My general ! my father !" and Ordoner threw himself into the old man's arms, who could not restrain a cry of joy.

"Ordoner—my brave Ordoner ! Pardieu ! I'm glad !" here the recollection of the annoyance he had felt, occurred to him. "I'm glad, seignior baron, that you have learned to control your feelings so well. You *seem* very glad to see me, and I presume, it was by exercising the virtue of self-denial, that you kept away until now ?"

"My father, did you not always tell me that an enemy, in danger, should be attended to, before a friend in safety ? I have been to Monckholm."

"True ! when an enemy's danger is most imminent—but Schumacker's situation——"

"Is more perilous than ever. Noble general, an odious plot is on foot for his destruction. Those who were born his friends, seek his ruin ; and it well becomes one born his enemy, to seek to save him."

The general, who had forgotten all his vexation, now interrupted Ordoner.

"My dear fellow, what can you mean ?

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Schumacker is under my protection. What plots, what enemies, are you speaking of ?"

Ordoner was at a loss what to answer, for he himself only knew that the danger was pressing, and partially understood its nature. There are many that will say he was a fool to expose his life upon such uncertain grounds as these ; but young and noble hearts do what seems good and just from instinct, and not from calculation ; it is only when prudence and discretion chills them that they begin to find out that generosity is but folly. And so it would be if men alone controlled the world, and there were no God. Now, Ordoner was at that age when one believes, and is believed ; his confidence in himself was boundless ; and in this feeling the general so far partook, as to acquiesce in conclusions which, perhaps, would not have stood the test of cool and deliberate examination.

"What plots, what enemies, my father ?" exclaimed Ordoner. "I'll tell you all about it, in a few days. You shall know all that I do. Meanwhile, I must leave you this evening."

"What ! this evening, again ? But for what, and where are you going ?"

"My dear father, you used to permit me sometimes to do good in secret."

"True, my brave Ordoner. But you know not how long you may be gone, and recollect that you have a very important affair on hand."

"My father has given me a month yet for reflection, and I am determined to devote the time to the service of one who needs my aid. Good deeds suggest good ideas. It will be time enough to see about this important affair when I return."

"Do you really dislike this marriage, then ?" asked the general, with an anxious air. "They tell me Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt is so handsome—have you ever seen her ?"

"Yes, I believe I have been in company with her. She is handsome."

"Well," resumed the general.

"Well," said Ordoner, "she will never be my wife."

The cool and decided manner, in which the young man announced this resolution, startled the general. He at once recurred to the suspicions of the haughty countess.

"Ordoner," said he, shaking his head, "I'm an old fisherman, and I ought to know something of the craft. Now, am I an old fool, or not ? This prisoner has a daughter——"

"I was this moment going to speak to you about her," cried the young man. "I

demand your protection for this unfortunate and helpless girl."

"Really!" replied the general gravely, "you appear to be very solicitous on her account."

"How should I be otherwise, when not only her life, but her honor is at stake!"

"Her life—her honor! Why, am I not governor here? Is she not under my protection? I don't understand you. Explain."

"My father, both the life of this defenceless prisoner, and the life and honor of his daughter, are threatened by an infamous plot."

"These are grave charges. What proofs have you?"

"For one: the son of a powerful house is now at Monckholm, sent there to seduce the daughter of the prisoner. He told me so himself."

The general recoiled, as if he had received a blow.

"My God!" he cried; "unhappy young creature! And I never knew of this; and yet Schumacker and his daughter are committed to my charge. Who is the wretch? What is the name of the family?"

Orderer grasped the general's hand:

"It is the family of d'Ahlefeldt!"

"d'Ahlefeldt!" exclaimed the governor. "I see it all; Lieutenant Frederic is now at Monckholm. And to this race they would ally my noble Orderer. I join you in your repugnance."

The old man folded his arms, and remained for some time in silence. Then pressing Orderer to his breast, he said:

"Go, my son. I will protect your hapless friends, during your absence. Go, if you think it necessary, and serve them as best you can. That infernal Countess d'Ahlefeldt is now here: perhaps you were aware of it."

At this moment, the door was thrown open, and the hussier announced,

"*The most noble, the Countess d'Ahlefeldt.*"

At the sound of this name, Orderer instinctively drew back into the farther part of the chamber; and the countess entering without perceiving him, accosted the governor, with—

"Seignior general, your pupil has deceived you—he did not go to Monckholm."

"Really!" replied the general.

"It is true; for my son, Frederic, who has just left the palace, assured me that he was on guard yesterday, and no stranger visited the port."

"Really!" repeated the general.

"So," continued the countess, with an

air of triumph, "you need not wait for your Orderer any longer."

"I do n't think I shall, madam," replied the general, coolly.

"General, I thought we were alone," said the countess, as she turned and discovered Orderer, who bowed profoundly. "But is it possible! I never saw him but once—if it were not for that costume—general, is not that the son of the viceroy?"

"The same, madam," replied Orderer. The countess smiled graciously.

"Then permit one who will have a better right hereafter, to ask where you were last evening, seignior count?"

"Seignior count! I believe I have not yet had the misfortune to lose my father."

"I trust not. But it may not be so disagreeable to acquire the title with the hand of a wife, as by the loss of a father."

"I have no ambition to acquire the title in either way, madam."

The countess was a little dashed, but soon recovered herself, and said with a smile:

"I've been rightly informed; his lordship is a little brusque in his manners; but he will feel more at home in the society of ladies, when Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt has thrown the gold chain of the order of the Elephant across his shoulders."

"That would be a chain, indeed!" replied Orderer.

"Do you hear, general?" continued the countess, still more embarrassed. "I doubt if your intractable pupil would even condescend to receive the title of colonel from a lady."

"You are quite right, madam," replied Orderer. "A man who wears a sword, ought not to owe his epaulettes to petticoat influence."

The countess blushed scarlet, but endeavored to carry the matter off with a laugh; and directly changing the subject with a gay air, she cried, "Seignior baron, where can you have been! Is it true that your lordship did not go to Monckholm last evening?"

"Noble countess, I am not always in the humor for answering questions. General, I'll see you again." Then shaking the old soldier by the hand, and making a low reverence to the countess, Orderer departed, leaving the lady amazed that she could make no discovery, and the general full of indignation at the discovery he had made.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HANGMAN'S HOUSE.

INSTEAD of following the weary steps of the two travellers, who left Drontheim by the Skongen gate, about the close of the day, we will join them on the narrow path which skirts the gulf, until you come to Vyglå. The wandering pair were both wrapped in mantles from head to foot. One of them walked erect, with the vigorous and active step of youth. From beneath his long cloak, the point of his sabre almost trailed upon the ground, while a dark plume floated in the wind above his cap. The other, though he evidently stooped in his gait, was yet a trifle taller than his companion. On his back was a hump, which, upon examination, would have turned out to be nothing more than a huge knapsack, covered by his well patched cloak, whose appearance testified to its long and faithful service. He had no other weapon than the staff with which he sustained his halting and unequal steps. If the night is too dark to allow them to be recognized, perhaps we may discover who they are from their conversation, which one of them has just renewed, after the long and to him tedious intermission of an hour or more of silence.

"Master of mine, we have reached the spot, where we can see, at the same time, the tower of Vyglå and the spires of the cathedral of Drontheim. That black mass before us is the tower, and behind, in the distance, is the cathedral, with its huge arches looming against the sky, like the skeleton of a mammoth."

"Is Vyglå far from Skongen?" asked the other traveller.

"We have to pass the Ordals before we get there, seignior; we shall not reach Skongen before three o'clock in the morning."

"What hour is that which I hear striking now?"

"Merciful Heavens! true enough! It is the clock at Drontheim; the wind brings it down to us. We shall have a storm; the northwest wind always brings a storm with it." In fact, the stars had already disappeared. "Come, seignior, let us quicken our pace, or we shall be overtaken."

"Willingly. But, my old friend, your burthen seems too heavy for you; let me carry it."

"No, indeed, noble sir; 'tis not for the eagle to bear the shell of the tortoise. I cannot think of troubling you with my knapsack."

"But you are fatigued, and it seems ve-

ry heavy. What have you got in it? I've heard the clinking of some kind of metal, as you walked, for an hour past."

"Oh, no, seignior; you are mistaken; there is nothing of the kind here. It contains nothing but some provisions and clothes. It does not fatigue me in the least, seignior."

The old man was at no small pains, to decline the kind offer of his stalwart companion; and the latter at last gave up the point, saying, "Well, if it does not tire you, keep it."

The other hastened to change the topic of conversation. "'Tis very annoying," he began, "to be obliged to hurry in the night over a road which, in the day time, affords to one at leisure so many objects of interest as this does. On the shores of the gulf, to the left, are to be found any quantity of Runic stones, upon which, 'tis said, you may read the traditions of the gods and giants. On the right, beyond those cliffs which skirt the road, is the morass of Schiold, which, doubtless, communicates by some subterranean canal with the sea; for the salt water lombric is found there—that singular fish, which your guide and humble servant has discovered subsists upon sand. In this tower of Vyglå, which we are approaching, the pagan king, Yumond, roasted the breast of Saint Etheldred with fire, made of the wood of the true cross, which he had won by conquest from Olaus III., who brought it to Copenhagen. They do say, that it has been impossible to establish a chapel there ever since—as every cross which is brought there is immediately consumed by fire from heaven."

At this moment, a broad and vivid flash of lightning for an instant displayed to the eyes of the travellers the gulf, the tower, the hills, and the cliff; and in the next, shrouded them in impenetrable darkness. It was followed by a deafening peal of thunder, which resounded from cloud to cloud, along the sky, and from cliff to cliff along the earth.

Above them, every star was hidden; the storm-clouds, packed mass upon mass over their heads, seemed to threaten them like an avalanche; the wind which had heaped them together, had not yet descended upon the trees, nor had the rain began to fall; around them was an ominous stillness; but far off upon the gulf was heard the tumult of the waters, and high aloft the scream of the gull.

At this moment, a sound, as if of unearthly laughter, was borne across the waste. The old man trembled, and seized

his companion by the arm. "Just Heavens!" he cried, "is that the laugh of the evil one—the voice of the storm, or of——"

Another flash of lightning, accompanied with a stunning clap of thunder, cut short his speech; and the tempest, as if it had awaited this signal, came down with unexampled fury. The travellers wrapped their mantles round them to guard against the rain, which now fell in torrents, and was swept in clouds of mist about their path.

"Old man," said his companion, "I observed by the last flash, that the tower of Vyglá was at our right. Let us leave our path, and seek shelter there."

"Shelter in the accursed tower, seignior? St. Hospice forbid! Recollect also, it is deserted."

"So much the better! we shall not have to wait at the gate."

"But recollect the abomination by which it is stained."

"Well, it cannot purify itself better than by extending the rights of hospitality to us. Come on; follow me; I'd take refuge in a den of thieves from such a storm as this."

So saying, he seized the old man by the arm, and compelled him to accompany him toward the dreaded tower, which the frequent flashes of lightning now discovered, looming black and gloomy over the waste at a little distance. As they approached it more nearly, they perceived a light shining through one of the loop-holes.

"There, you see," observed the young man, "it is not deserted; keep a good heart."

"Worse, and worse, seignior; it must be inhabited by devils. You would not venture upon their privacy?"

They had now reached the foot of the tower; and the young man knocked loudly at a new and stout door which secured the entrance.

"Don't be alarmed," he said to his companion. "It is, doubtless, some holy hermit who resides here to sanctify the place."

"No; I'll never enter here. A hermit, indeed! I'll wager that the hermit who lives here wears, for a chaplet, one of the seven chains of Beelzebub."

Meanwhile a light descended from window to window, and at length shone through the key-hole.

"You are late, Nychol!" exclaimed a voice within. "The gallows was put up by noon, and it takes but six hours to come from Skongen to Vyglá."

These words fell upon the ear of the travellers, as the door was being unfastened. It was opened by a woman, who, at

the sight of the strangers, started back with a cry of mingled alarm and menace.

The appearance of this female, was by no means attractive. She was of a tall stature, and the iron lamp which she held above her head, shed its light upon a countenance which was ghastly pale, wrinkled, and hard-featured, and the glance of her eyes was as sinister as the ray which falls from a funeral torch: her lower garment was of a red serge; it seemed soiled in places, by spots of a still deeper hue, and hung down to her naked feet. Upon her shoulders she wore a man's coat, of the same color, the sleeves of which were cut off at the elbows, and her long gray tresses escaping from under a coarse net, which she wore upon her head, waved wildly in the wind, and added to the savage and repulsive appearance which she presented.

"My good woman," said the younger traveller, "we are half drowned with this rain. You have shelter; we have money; let us in."

The old man plucked him by the sleeve, and whispered in his ear:

"For God's sake, what are you saying? If this is not the devil's own dwelling house, it is a robber's hold. Our money will be our ruin."

"Hush!" replied the cavalier, drawing forth his purse, and exhibiting it to the woman, as he repeated his request.

Recovering a little from her surprise, this personage regarded the new-comers alternately, with a fixed and haggard eye.

"Strangers," she exclaimed, at last, "your guardian angels must have abandoned you: what seek you of the accursed dwellers in the accursed tower? No mortals ever sent you here for shelter; they would have told you, 'better brave the lightning and the blast, upon the open heath, than seek for refuge at the tower of Vyglá.' He whose home this is, enters no human dwelling. When he quits his solitude, it is only to be alone among the crowd; he lives by death alone; he is the accursed among men; the instrument of their vengeance; he exists only by their crimes. The vilest wretch, at his hour of doom, claims the right of adding his execrations to those of the multitude. Strangers—for such you must be, or your feet would have recoiled from the door-sill of this tower—tarry not; seek not to share their den with the wolf and his whelps; regain your road, and, unless you would be shunned by your fellows, and avoided, even by your brothers, never let it be known that the lamp of the tower of Vyglá has shone upon your faces."

So saying, she advanced toward our travellers, and with an imperative gesture, motioned them away. The old man, trembling in every limb, regarded his companion with a supplicatory air; but the latter, who, owing to her volubility, had not understood half of what the strange woman had uttered, believed her mad, and felt by no means disposed to expose himself again to the pelting of the storm.

"My good madam," said he, "you have described a personage so extraordinary, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of making his acquaintance."

"An acquaintance with him may soon be made, young man," replied the woman, "but it will sooner be terminated. If your evil demon impels you to seek it, go and murder the living, or profane the dead, and your wish will be gratified."

"*Profane the dead!*" repeated the old man, in a faltering tone, as he shrunk back into the shadow made by his companion.

"I do not exactly comprehend your meaning; but the modes you recommend, seem rather indirect, to say the least," returned the cavalier; "the shortest way to make his acquaintance, will be to remain here, I imagine; besides, no one but a madman would travel such a night as this."

"None but a madman would enter here," muttered the old man.

"Unhappy! why do you knock at the gate of one who opens no door but that of the sepulchre?"

"Let it be the door of the sepulchre then, if you choose to call it so. Do you think I'm to be frightened by doleful words? My sabre is my safeguard against all real danger. Come, close the door, for the wind is cold—here's your money."

"And what is your money to me? In your hands it is bright; in mine it will be sullied. But give it me; you shall have the shelter you insist upon. Gold may buy shelter from the storm, but will it save from the abhorrence of all the human race? You pay more for hospitality than your fellows do for the shedding of blood. Wait for an instant. This is the first time that a man has ever brought gold here with unstained hands."

Thus saying, she set down her lamp, and descended a ladder into a vault beneath the floor on which they were standing.

While the old man, shivering with cold and terror, was invoking the aid of St. Hospice, the young cavalier took up the lamp, and quietly proceeded to make a survey of the large circular apartment in which they had been left. The first thing he observed on approaching the wall, caused him to

start; and the other, who had followed him with his eyes, exclaimed:

"My God! a gibbet!"

"Yes;" returned the young man: "and here are the chains, steel collars, saws, knives, and other instruments of torture."

"Holy saints in paradise! where are we?" cried the other

The young man very coolly continued his examination: "Here is the rope—here the furnace and branding-irons—here are pincers and scalpels, and here are whips with steel points in the lash—here is the axe, and here the mace for breaking on the rack—"

"Why, this is the very wardrobe of hell!" exclaimed his companion, interrupting this dreadful catalogue.

"Look! here," continued the other—"here is the rack and wheel itself, still grimmed with blood. Really, this is a most sinister collection. I'm almost sorry, my old friend, I brought you here with me."

"A pretty time to think of that, truly," faltered the old one, more dead than alive.

"Nonsense! Do n't be alarmed; what matters the place—am not I with you?"

"A great protection, truly," replied the other. "Your sabre, of three feet blade, against all these horrors, and we know not what else besides."

The red woman at length reappeared, and taking her lamp, beckoned the travellers to follow her. This they did with some difficulty, up a narrow staircase, which was excavated in the thickness of the wall, and at length arrived at an upper apartment which was also circular. In the centre of this room blazed a large fire, upon a stone hearth, as was customary in ancient gothic edifices, and in the vaulted ceiling above it, was an aperture to permit the escape of smoke, which, nevertheless, had imparted a dingy and sombre appearance to the whole interior. Before this fire, upon a spit, was a piece of fresh meat, from which the old man immediately turned with horror and disgust.

"It was on that accursed hearth," he whispered to his companion, "that the flesh of the saint was consumed by the burning wood of the true cross."

A large table was spread at some distance from the fire, and the red woman invited her guests to be seated.

"Strangers," she said, placing the lamp before them, "the supper is nearly ready, and my husband will soon be home; for even he dreads the evil spirit of the waste, which at midnight sweeps around the accursed tower."

When their hostess had retired to her

hearth, Ordoner, (for the reader has doubtless, ere this time, discovered that he and his guide, Benignus Spiagudry, are the two travellers whom we have for some time accompanied in the dark,) had leisure, for the first time, to examine at his ease, the grotesque disguise which the old keeper had assumed upon leaving his office. Discarding his well worn suit of leather, Spiagudry had incased his person in robes of black, the spoils of a broken-hearted grammarian, who had drowned himself in the gulf, when he found that Jupiter made Jovis in the genitive. In place of his shoes, he had put on a pair of postillion's jack boots, which his spindle shanks filled so poorly that he was obliged to have recourse to whisps of straw, by way of stuffers, to keep them from dropping off. A large flowing periwig, the legacy of a fashionable French traveller, who had been assassinated and robbed at the gate of Drontheim, not only concealed his baldness, but hung in luxuriant tresses over his shoulders. One of his eyes was covered with a black patch, while his cheeks, (thanks to a pot of rouge, which had been found in the pocket of an old maid, who drowned herself for love,) were tinged with a ruddy glow, a portion of which the impartial rain had bestowed upon his chin, and the linen which encircled his neck. Before he sat down, he had taken the pack from off his back, wrapped it carefully in his mantle, and placed it beneath him; and now while he was himself the subject of curious examination from his companion, his own regards, which partook both of inquietude and horror, were fixed upon the flesh which was roasting before the fire. Every few moments, a half-smothered exclamation broke from him, which well explained the train of thought which was passing through his mind: "Human flesh!—Horrendas Epulas—anthropophagi—a supper for Moloch—nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidat—where are we?—Druidess—Iremensal—the devil roasting Lycaon." Suddenly, his eyes still fixed upon the mysterious substance upon the spit, he exclaimed: "Ah, ha! thank God, I see its tail!"

Ordoner, who had watched him attentively, and who began to catch the thread of his ideas, could scarcely restrain his mirth, while he said gravely to Spiagudry, "The tail proves nothing; how do you know but it may be the hind-quarter of a devil?"

But Spiagudry's attention had, by this time, been attracted to a new object of terror, and he did not hear his companion's comfortable suggestion.

"Ah!" said he. "Merciful heavens! seignior, look there in that dark recess, on that heap of straw—the little naked bodies, the carcasses of children! that is the larder."

"Well, they have a goodly stock of provisions laid in," replied Ordoner quietly; "no danger of starving to night."

"Some one is at the door," observed the red woman, who was busy about the fire.

In fact, at this moment, a treble knock was heard above the howlings of the storm.

"There comes Nychol at last," exclaimed the hostess, taking the lamp, and hurrying down the stairway.

Just as the travellers were about to renew their disquisition upon the state of the larder, and the quality of the provisions now in the process of cooking; they were deterred by a confused sound of voices at the door of the tower, one of which, of a peculiar tone, was heard above the rest, and caused Spiagudry to quake with fear.

"Silence, woman!" exclaimed this voice, "here we remain. Does the thunderbolt ask permission to enter, where it will?"

"Master! master!" faltered Spiagudry, "Heaven pity us."

The noise of steps ascending the staircase, was soon heard, and the hostess made her appearance, followed by two men, clad in the garb of religion. One of them was of goodly stature, and wore the black gown and hood of a Lutheran minister; the other, shorter, but more massive, was clad in the robe of a hermit, which was secured about the waist by a cord; his features were entirely concealed under his capuchin, and his hands beneath his long sleeves. Nothing appertaining to his person could be discovered, except his long black beard, and Spiagudry's fears were allayed by the pacific and sanctimonious appearance of the new-comers.

"My good woman," began the Lutheran, "do not be alarmed; it is the duty of the servants of Christ, to return good for evil; fear not that we shall so far reverse the rule of our calling, as to injure those who do us a service. If the reverend brother, who accompanies me, spoke rather roughly, just now, he was to blame; but the best of us are liable to err. I wandered from my road, in going from Skongen to Drontheim, and was without guide or shelter from the storm, when I fell in with him, and he, who was himself seeking shelter, permitted me to accompany him to your abode, with the hospitality of which he professed to be acquainted. Do

not grudge us a welcome, worthy hostess; succor the weary, and house the wanderer; so shall God save your fields from the blast, and shelter your flocks and herds from the tempest."

"Old man!" replied the red woman, "I have neither fields, nor flocks, nor herds."

"Ah! you are poor, then. Well, the poor are God's especial care. May you live long with the husband of your choice, honored, not for your wealth, but for your virtues; may your children grow up in the esteem of mankind, and succeed their father."

"Say no more! old man; you know not what you speak of. If our children grow up like us, they will grow up in the scorn and execration of mankind; say no more. Your blessings will turn to curses, upon our heads."

"Heavens! what are you, then? With what crimes are you stained? In what vices do you pass your days?"

"What call you vice? and what virtue? We are a privileged race: there is neither vice nor virtue for us."

"The woman is deranged," observed the Lutherau, to the hermit, who was drying his robe before the fire.

"No, preacher, you shall know where you are. I am an object of horror, and not of pity. I am not insane, I am the wife of—"

Again a loud, and prolonged knocking, was heard at the door, which drowned the concluding words of the hostess, much to the disappointment of Ordener and Spiagudry, who were listening with great attention, for the promised denouement.

"My curse upon the syndic, high judiciary of Skongen, who gave us this tower for a residence. I should not wonder, if that was not Nychol, after all," said the woman, as she took up the lamp, and departed murmuring, "how if this is another traveller! but what matters it? let him come: it never rains but it pours."

The four travellers remained seated about the fire: Spiagudry, who had been so alarmed by the voice of the stranger, was perfectly reassured by his religious dress, and the color of his beard. Had he seen the fiery glances, however, which now and then were shot at him, from under the capuchin, he would have had more cause than one to tremble.

The general silence was broken by the Lutheran minister, who said to the hermit: "Brother, I presume you are one of the Catholic priests, escaped from the last persecution, and were seeking your place

of concealment, when I met you; can you tell me where we are?"

Before the hermit had time to reply, the door opened, and the red woman, accompanied by her husband, entered.

"Wife!" he exclaimed, "is it the storm which has brought so much company to our haunted roof to-night?"

"Nychol," she replied, "I could not prevent them."

"Nay, no matter how many there are, so they have money to pay for their accommodation; I'd as soon have gold for lodging a traveller as for hanging a brigand."

As he said this, the speaker paused for a moment, at the door of the apartment, and his guests had a full view of his person and features. He was a man of colossal stature, clad like the hostess in garments of red serge: his enormous head appeared as if it were set directly upon his shoulders, without the intervention of a neck—therein presenting a strange and almost ludicrous contrast to his wife, who was endowed with a lean and scraggy one of most inordinate length. His forehead was low; his nose flat; his eyebrows thin and scant; his eyes surmounted with circles of deep purple, shone like living coals swimming in blood. The lower part of his face, divested of beard, exhibited a huge mouth, set off with lips of a dark and livid hue; his grizzly gray hair was covered with a coarse fur cap, which was drenched with the rain, and which he touched, very slightly, to the travellers who sat by the fire.

Benignus Spiagudry could hardly repress an ejaculation of horror, as the strange personage entered the room; and the Lutheran minister experienced a momentary sensation of surprise and disgust, as he turned around in answer to the salutation of the new-comer, which was first addressed to him.

"Ah ha! is that you, seignior minister!" exclaimed the master of the house. "Well, I hardly thought to have the favor of seeing your piteous and whining face again to-day."

The minister repressed his feelings of repugnance, and he became calm and serious.

"And I, my son," he replied, "rejoice at the recurrence which has brought together the lost sheep and his pastor; who, I trust, may be permitted to bring him again into the fold."

"By the gibbet of Haman! That is the first time I ever saw a sheep. I'll tell you what, father, if you go to flatter the vulture, you must not call him a dove."

"'Tis not by flattery, my son, that the culture is converted to a dove. I would not flatter you, but do you good. I pity you."

"You must have a marvellous stock of pity, seignior," replied the other, with a coarse laugh. "I thought you expended all you had upon that poor devil whom you exhorted, and I hung, to-day."

"That unfortunate being was much less to be pitied than you, my son, for he wept, and you but scoff. Happy the man who finds, when he makes expiation for his crimes, how much less powerful is human vengeance, than the mercy of God."

"Well said, master preacher," replied the host. "Happy the man that weeps. Now this poor devil whom we waited on to-day, had no other fault than loving the king too much—so much that he had to strike off the royal portrait on little medals of brass, the which, to make them more worthy of the honor, he washed with gold. And his majesty in return, was so grateful for this manifestation of his regard, that he ordered him le grand cordon of hemp, which I had the honor to put about his neck, in the public square of Skongen, to-day, in my capacity of the grand chancellor of the order of the gibelet, assisted by my reverend friend, here, the chaplain of the same——"

"Silence, scoffer!" exclaimed the preacher; "can you jest with the horrors of your fearful calling! Listen to the thunder."

"Well, what's thunder! Nothing but the devil laughing."

"Heavens! and this man has this day put his fellow to death."

"A truce to your sermons, you old fool," exclaimed the host, who began to be angry; "unless you would have reason to curse the angel of darkness, that brought us together twice in one day. Imitate your comrade, there; he is quiet enough, and I'll warrant would be glad to be back in his hermitage at Lynrass. By the way, brother hermit, I thank you for the blessings you pour out upon the tower of the accursed. But it seems to me you used to be taller and that your head was white. I cannot be mistaken, however; you are the hermit of Lynrass, are you not? The only one in Drontheim?"

"The only one," replied the other in a low voice.

"Then we two are the only solitaries in the province. Here, Bechlie, hurry that quarter of lamb, I'm hungry; I was detained at Burlock, this evening, by that cursed Doctor Munsyll, who would not give me but

twelve shillings for the body. That infernal keeper of the spladgest at Drontheim, gets forty shillings for every one that falls into his hands. Hollo! you man in the periwig, what's the matter with you? are you going to tumble off your seat? By the way, have you finished drying the skeleton of Orgivius, the poisoner, Bechlie? It's time it was sent to the cabinet of curiosities at Berghen? Did you think to send one of the children to the syndie of Lævig, to-day, for the money that is due me?—let's see: there is four double crowns for boiling a sorcerer, and two alchimyists—twenty shillings for hanging Ismael Typhmire, the Jew, by direction of monseigneur, the bishop; and one crown for putting a new arm to the city gallows."

"The money is still in the hands of the syndie, because your son did not carry a wooden box to receive it. The syndie's valet would not put it into his hand."

"Curse him!" exclaimed the husband, knitting his brows; "I only wish his neck may fall into my hands; see whether I should hesitate to touch him. However, we must keep well with that syndie, for it is to him that the complaint of the robber Ivan has been preferred, in reference to my putting him to the question. By the way, I wish you would keep the children from playing with my pincers and thumb-screws; I positively have not got an instrument fit to operate with. Where are the little devils?" he continued, approaching the recess where Spiagudry had, with so much horror, discovered the infant corpses. "Oh, then, here they are!" exclaimed this tender father; "they sleep as still and sound as if they had been hung."

From the course of his remarks, the reader will, before this, have discovered who was the resident of the tower of Vygla, and what was his occupation. Spiagudry knew him upon his entrance, having often seen him exercise the functions of his fearful office at Drontheim. No small degree of animosity already existed between them; and, when the old keeper reflected upon the deed of the night before, which might, he knew not how soon, subject him to the tender mercies of his enemy, his blood ran cold in his veins. He drew his seat nearer to Ordoner, and whispered, "*This is Nychol Orugix, the executioner of Drontheim!*"

Ordoner, who had long suspected the truth, could not avoid shuddering with disgust, though not with fear. So revolting was the presence of this wretch and outcast, that he, for the first time, almost regretted that he had not braved the tem-

pest, and the storm, rather than have craved shelter under his accursed roof. But curiosity at the singular character of the strange personage before him, soon banished these emotions; and he sat, quietly watching his movements, and listening to his conversation, as one gazes at the chafing of the caged hyena, and hearkens to his grumblings and howls. Far different was the deportment of Spiagudry. Covering himself again with his mantle, he placed himself, as far as he could, behind Ordoner, drew his patch still further over his eye, and his periwig lower down upon his brow. He strove at once to avoid observation, and took no part in the conversation. He even held his breath so long, as to oblige him to draw it at intervals, with a deep sigh, which more than once had nearly attracted the attention he was so anxious to escape.

In a few moments the hostess served up the quarter of lamb, tail and all, upon a large earthen dish. The hangman took his seat between the two preachers, and opposite Spiagudry and Ordoner, while his wife, after placing upon the table a jug of beer, a loaf of bread, and some wooden platters, returned to the fire-place, and occupied herself in sharpening the scalpels and cleaning the pincers, which the children had been playing with.

"Now, reverend sir," said Orugix to the Lutheran, with a laugh, "permit your sheep to offer you a piece of his lamb. And you, my friend, in the periwig, what's the matter with you? the wind must have blown your top-knot over your eyes."

"Yes, worthy sir, the wind and the storm," stammered Spiagudry.

"Why, you are scared!" returned the other. "Come, cheer up; you see the preachers and I are jolly good fellows. Who are you? and who is your silent companion there? Let us hear you talk; if your conversation is in keeping with your appearance, you must be a funny old fellow enough."

"Your worship is pleased to be merry," replied Spiagudry, trying to twist his features into the imitation of a grin; "I am only—only a poor old——"

"An old savant and sorcerer, I'll bet!" exclaimed the jovial hangman.

"Nay, your worship, a savant, if you please, but not a sorcerer."

"I'm sorry for that; a sorcerer would just make our company complete. Come, comrades, let us drink to this learned savant who honors us with his company to supper. Brother preacher, here's to the health of the gentleman you and I hung to-

day. Now, father hermit, won't you taste my beer?"

The hermit had, in fact, drawn from under his robe a gourd, from which he filled his cup with what appeared to be pure water.

"Parbleu! hermit of Lynrass, if you will not taste my beer, I'll try a little of that water, which you seem to be so fond of."

"Be it so," answered the hermit.

"Take off your glove, then, my reverend friend; folks do n't fill for each other with covered hands."

The other shook his head and muttered, "It is a vow."

Scarcely had Orugix put his cup to his lips when he set it down, and rejected the draught with disgust. The hermit drank his portion off at once.

"What the devil do you call that, father hermit?" exclaimed the hangman; "curse me if I ever drank such infernal stuff but once before, and that was when I came near being drowned, on my passage from Copenhagen to Drontheim. That never came from the holy well of Lynrass! It's sea-water!"

"Sea-water!" ejaculated Spiagudry, with alarm, which was by no means lessened when he looked upon the enormous glove of the hermit.

"Well, what then?" exclaimed the hangman, turning to him with a laugh; "you seem to be scared at everything, my old Absalom. What is it to you if this canobite chooses to mortify his appetite with sea-water?"

"Alas! alas! master," responded the other; "sea-water—ah! there is but one man who——"

"Come—come, learned doctor, you do not know what you are talking about. Something ails you; either you are troubled with an evil conscience, or you scorn my company."

The last words, pronounced in somewhat of a menacing tone, brought Spiagudry to his senses, and taught him the necessity of concealing his emotions. In the hope of appeasing his host he drew upon the resources of his well-stored mind, and mustering all the strength he could, replied:

"Scorn your company, my worthy host? What you, whose very presence in the province is the highest evidence of its regal privileges—you, the finisher of the law, the avenger of crime, the sword of justice, and the buckler of innocence! Scorn the company of a functionary whom Aristotle, in his fifth book upon jurisprudence, classes among magistrates, and whose fees, Parris of Puteo, in his work upon Syndis, fix-

es at five golden crowns. Whose confreres in Cronstadt acquire a patent of nobility when they have struck off three hundred heads—whose awful but high duty is performed in Franconia by the latest married; in Rentlingia by the youngest counsellor, and in Stedien by the last installed burgo-master! How could I have other than the highest respect for your order, when, at St. Vincents, the abbot of St. Germain des Pres gives you yearly a boar's head, and places you at the head of his procession."

Here the old keeper's learned disquisition was abruptly broken off by the hangman, who exclaimed:

"Well, this is all news to me; not one of all these rights and privileges which you tell of were ever extended to me by the Abbot of St. Germain, or any one else; I must have been cheated out of them. But, in truth, gentlemen," he continued, turning to his guests, "aside from all the stuff which this old fool has been repeating, I have been badly used, and am really unfortunate; for, old as I am, I am but the executioner of one poor province. I thought I had the game in my own hand once, and made sure of rising as rapidly in my profession as Stillison Dickoy, the Muscovite headsman. Will you believe it, that four-and-twenty years ago I had the chance of beheading the Prime Minister Schumacker?"

"Schumacker Count Griffenfeldt?" exclaimed Ordoner.

"Ah, that wakes you up, my silent friend, does it? Yes," he continued, "Schumacker Count Griffenfeldt; and, if it please his gracious majesty, it is probable that he may fall by my hand yet. But come, comrades, finish this beer and I'll tell you all about it.

"In the year 1676, I was assistant to Ruam Statdt, the executioner royal of Denmark, at Copenhagen, when Count Griffenfeldt was condemned to death. It so happened that my master was sick, and I succeeded in getting appointed to officiate in his place. I shall never forget the day; I erected a fine scaffold, which was hung with black, in honor of the high rank of the condemned. At eight o'clock, the guard noble surrounded the scaffold, and the hulans of Slesvig were stationed to keep off the people, who thronged the grand square by thousands. Who is there that would not have gone out of his wits in my situation?—there I stood upon the platform with the great sword in my hands, and every eye fixed upon me. At that moment I certainly was the most important personage in the two kingdoms; I felt that

my fortune was made; for it was I that was to finish the work which had so long occupied the great lords who had leagued together for the destruction of the chancellor. They could not, in return, do less than make me executioner royal, and then I should have a good salary, high fees, and servants of my own. Well, the clock struck ten—the condemned came out of his prison—he crossed the square and ascended the scaffold with a firm step, and a tranquil mien. I offered to tie his hair, he refused and tied it himself, remarking, with a smile, to the prior of St. Andrews, '*It's a long time since I've been my own hair-dresser.*' I proceeded to place the black bandage over his eyes; he pushed it away with disdain, but without showing any ill will toward me. '*My friend,*' he observed, soon after, '*this is the first time, so far as I know, that the two extremes of the law have ever met: the chancellor and the executioner.*' I shall always recollect that speech. He would not have the black cushion which I placed for his knees, but, after embracing the chaplain, he knelt upon the bare-floor, before the block, and exclaimed, in a loud and firm voice, '*I die innocent!*' Then I took the mace and broke his escutcheon of arms, and the collars of his orders, crying aloud, as is customary, '*This is an act of justice.*' That seemed to shake the firmness of the count, but he only said, '*The king gave them, let him take them again if he will.*' Then he laid his head upon the block, with his face to the east, and I raised my sword with both hands, when—what do you think?—at that very moment I heard a shout of '*Pardon!*' Pardon! in the king's name, for Schumacker!" I turned, and saw an aid-de-camp galloping toward the scaffold, and waving a parchment. It was a pardon. The count received the intelligence with an air of quiet satisfaction, but without any show of joy. When it was read to him, however, he exclaimed, '*Just Heaven! perpetual imprisonment! their mercy is a mockery!*' and he who had ascended the scaffold firm and collected, left it as much overcome as a thief who is about to be turned off. Well, all this was nothing to me, for I had no idea that this man's reprieve would be my loss, as it was not my fault. So I removed the scaffold, and returned to my master's house, full of hope, though, I must confess, a little disappointed at the loss of the gold crown which I should have had for head money. But I soon found that this was not all my loss. The next morning I received the appointment of executioner of Drontheim, the meanest province

in Norway, and was ordered to depart immediately. Now mark, gentlemen, what great effects sometimes are produced by the most trifling causes. The enemies of the count, by way of exhibiting their clemency, had procured his pardon, but did not intend that it should arrive until the moment *after* his execution. As the devil would have it, it came the moment *before*, and I was blamed for being too slow. Now, I knew nothing of their plans, and would it have been decent in me, without sufficient cause, to have hurried a man of his rank, or have prevented him from chatting a few minutes before his execution, if he chose? Would it have looked well for the royal executioner, or his deputy, when he had to operate upon the grand chancellor of the realm, to have done his work with no more ceremony and with as much haste as if he was a provincial hangman, turning off a Jew? But there was another cause besides this, for my ill-luck. I had a brother, who, for all I know, is still living. He had changed his name, and obtained an appointment in the household of the Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt. This rascal was ashamed of me and my occupation; he wanted to get me out of Copenhagen, and took this means of doing so. Never mind; perhaps I may have an opportunity of serving him in my line some day."

Here the hangman had to stop, and give vent to the mirth which this brotherly conceit suggested, and then continued:

"You see, my friends, how it is with me. But no matter; I'm no longer ambitious; I follow my calling faithfully; I sell my bodies to the surgeons, or Bechlie prepares them, and I dispose of the skeletons to the cabinet of Berghen. I laugh at everything, and put up with all—even with this poor devil of a woman, who was a gipsy, and has lost her senses by living here. My three young ones are growing up in the fear of the devil, and the gallows; my name is the terror of all the children in Drontheim; the syndie furnishes me a cart and my red clothes; the accursed tower finds me a shelter, and sometimes I am honored with the company of the reverend clergy, who preach to me, or with that of a learned savant, who flatters me that my office is one of great dignity and honor. In fact, I am about as well off as any one else; I eat, drink, hang, and sleep."

"He kills, and he sleeps!" murmured the Lutheran. "Unhappy man!"

"I believe the wretch is happy," exclaimed the hermit.

"As much of a wretch as you, father hermit, but a great deal happier. My bu-

siness is fair, and would be very good, if some people were not continually injuring it by obtaining pardons for the condemned. Would you believe it, that these famous nuptials which have been set on foot, have given occasion to the newly appointed almoner of Drontheim, to ask the remission of the sentences of twelve condemned prisoners, who belonged to me?"

"Belonged to you?" cried the minister.

"Certainly, father. Seven of them were to have been whipped, two branded, and three hung; that makes twelve, don't it? That is just twelve gold crowns, and thirty shillings. What do you think, gentlemen, of this almoner's robbing me of my money in this way? That infernal *Athenasius Munder*, as they call his name, I wish I had hold of him."

The minister rose, and looking the butcher calmly in the face, cried, "My son, I am Athenasius Munder."

With a countenance full of fury, Orugix sprung to his feet; but when he met the firm, but mild and benevolent gaze of the minister, he hesitated, and after a moment, in evident confusion, sunk into his seat again.

A profound silence prevailed, which was first broken by Ordoner, who had advanced to protect the minister.

"Nychol Orugix," he said, "here are thirteen crowns to indemnify you for what you will lose by the pardon of the condemned."

"Alas!" interrupted the minister, "who knows whether I shall be able to obtain grace for them? I must first interest the son of the viceroy: it all depends upon his marriage with the chancellor's daughter."

"Seignior almoner, you will obtain what you wish. Ordoner Guldenlew will never receive the nuptial ring, until your prayers are granted."

"Oh! my young friend, what can you do? But God appreciates your good-will and will reward it."

The thirteen crowns, which Ordoner had given to Orugix, had by this time completely appeased that functionary, and he now accosted the minister in the best possible humor:

"Seignior almoner, you're a brave man, and worthy of the chapel of St. Hilarion. I did not mean all the hard things I said of you. You follow your own path, without turning, and if it does happen to cross mine, that is not your fault. But there is one, who does cross my path, that I wish I could get hold of—and that is the keeper of the dead-house at Drontheim—that cursed old magician—what do they call his

name?—Splugry?—Spladugry? Tell me, my learned friend in the periwig, there, what is the name of your fellow-sorcerer? You must have met him caroeing about in the air upon a broomstick, some witches' sabbath."

If poor Benignus could have had the offer of taking an aerial journey upon a broomstick, at that particular moment, he would have embraced it at once, at the risk of his neck. Never had the poor old man been so entirely overcome by his fears. Ever since his entrance into the tower, his apprehensions had been accumulating. The wild mien and haggard eyes of the mad woman; the voice, the gloves of the mysterious hermit; the rashness, as he considered it, of his companion; and, last of all, the hangman, his bitter foe, into whose domicil he had unwittingly rushed, when flying from an imputed crime—all these things rushed upon his thoughts, when the question which we have just stated was put to him. He had no mind to imitate the intrepidity of the minister, and his only alternative was to preserve a profound silence.

"Well!" repeated the hangman, "do n't you know the name of the keeper of the spladges? Do you hear me, or does your periwig make you deaf?"

"One moment, worthy sir," faltered the keeper. "No, no; I do not know his name; I swear to you I do not."

"He does not know it," exclaimed the hermit, "and he is willing to swear to it. This man's name is Spiagudry."

"What!—mine?" exclaimed the old man, in terror.

"Yours?" said the hangman; "who said it was! It is the old heathen of a keeper we were speaking of. Seems to me you are scared at nothing. What are you making those grimaces for? Well, you are a funny old dog; I should like to hang you. So, you do n't know this Benignus Spiagudry?"

"No, worthy sir," replied the keeper, who was a little reassured, by finding that he was not discovered; "and if he has had the misfortune to offend you, I should be very sorry to know him."

"But you, father hermit; you appear to know him."

"Oh yes; I know him very well," replied the other; "he is a tall gaunt old man, thin and bald."

Spiagudry, justly alarmed at this commencement, gave his periwig another tug.

"He stoops very much," continued the hermit.

Spiagudry drew himself up as erect as a whipping-post.

"And for the rest, he might be mistaken for one of the bodies which are committed to his charge, if it were not for his little gray eyes."

Spiagudry adjusted his patch.

"Thank you, father," said the hangman to the hermit; "I shall know the old Jew now, whenever I meet him."

Spiagudry, who was an excellent Christian, was quite scandalized at this term, and exclaimed:

"Jew! master," and recollecting his peril, he stopped short.

"Yes; Jew or Pagan, no matter which; he has dealings with the devil, they say."

"I believe he would have," observed the hermit, with a sardonic smile, which his capuchon could not entirely hide, "if he was not too great a poltroon; but he is as cowardly as he is wicked—so cowardly that he does not know himself, at times."

"Not know himself!" repeated the keeper, internally.

"I'm sorry he is a coward," remarked the hangman, "for he's not worth hating, in that case. A man may combat the serpent, but he can only crush the lizard."

Spiagudry here hazarded a word in self defence.

"But," said he, "are you sure that the public officer you are speaking of, is as bad as you make him out to be? Is his reputation——"

"As bad as can be," exclaimed the hermit.

"But," said the keeper, turning to the hangman, "what has this man done to offend you?"

"Why," replied the other, "one part of his business is the same as mine; we both deal in dead bodies, and he does all he can to hurt my trade."

"Oh, worthy sir, I think you must be mistaken. Sure I am, if this man had partaken of your hospitalities, as I have to-night, and made the acquaintance of your amiable lady, and your sweet children; sure I am, he would never do aught to displease you."

No sooner had Spiagudry delivered himself of this eloquent appeal, than the red woman sprung up from the fire and said, in a low and solemn voice:

"The tongue of the viper is never more venomous, than when it is covered with honey."

She sat down, and Spiagudry, unable to account for the failure of his studied effort, said to himself:

"She must be crazy, indeed!"

"Bechlie is right, my learned friend," cried the hangman; "I shall begin to think you have a viper's tongue, if you say anything more in behalf of this cursed Spiagudry."

"Please God, worthy sir," replied the keeper, "I've not another word to say about him."

"You had better not; for you know not the extent to which he has carried his insolence. Would you believe it? he dares to dispute my right to the body of the famous brigand, Hans of Iceland."

"Hans of Iceland!" exclaimed the hermit.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I have seen him," said the hermit.

"Well; what I tell you is true. This infernal Spiagudry has got up a petition that a price be set upon Hans's head."

"He has petitioned that a price be set on the head of Hans!" exclaimed the hermit.

"He has had the audacity to do so, in order that he may get hold of the body of the brigand, which belongs to me by every right."

"That is infamous, indeed, master Orugix, responded the hermit, "to dispute your right to what is so clearly your own."

These words were accompanied with a malignant smile, which terrified Spiagudry.

"And it is so much the more provoking, too, that I should lose the execution of such a famous fellow as Hans, when I need something of the kind to bring me into notice again, and enable me to recover, if possible, what I lost by Schumacker."

"It is, indeed, master Nychol."

"Well, brother hermit, if Hans does fall into my hands, come and see me; we will have a fat hog killed, and make a feast in honor of my coming preferment."

"I shall be glad to come," replied the hermit, "that is, if I am free to do so. But I thought you said just now, that you had discarded ambition."

"Well I may do so, when I see people petitioning to take away my just rights."

"So Spiagudry has really petitioned that a price may be set on the head of Hans?" repeated the hermit, in a voice which made the poor keeper quake.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "do n't make up your minds too hastily; it may be a false report."

"A false report! no such thing," cried the hangman; "the petition got up by Spiagudry, and signed by the syndics, is now

at Drontheim, and only waits the approbation of the governor."

The executioner was so well informed, that Spiagudry ventured no further conversation, but contented himself with cursing, in his heart, the hour that his rash companion had brought him into such company. But what was his terror, when he heard the hermit ask the hangman what was the punishment for sacrilege.

The effect of this question upon the keeper, was much the same as if any one had torn off his periwig and black patch. He awaited in agony the answer of the executioner, who was drinking his glass.

"That depends upon the nature of the sacrilege," was the answer at length.

"Suppose it is profaning the dead!"

Benignus expected every moment to hear the hermit call him by name, and charge him with the deed.

"Why," said Orugix, coolly, "formerly they used to hang the offender alive, with the body he had outraged."

"And now?"

"Oh, now the penalty is mitigated."

"Is mitigated!" repeated Spiagudry, somewhat relieved.

"Yes;" repeated the hangman, with the negligent air of a man who speaks of an easy piece of work. "Now they, in the first place, brand them with a hot iron, in the shape of an S, on the fleshy part of the thigh——"

"And then?" interrupted the old keeper, who thought it would be difficult to inflict that punishment on him.

"And then," continued the executioner, "they hang them."

"Oh, my God! hang them?" exclaimed Spiagudry.

"Hallo, what's the matter now?" said the hangman. "You look at me as a thief does at the gallows."

"I'm glad to see that the laws are becoming more humane," observed the hermit.

By this time the storm had abated, and the party heard, very distinctly, the clear melodious winding of a horn without.

"Nychol," exclaimed the red woman, "they are in pursuit of some malefactor. That is the horn of the royal archers."

"The horn of the archers?" repeated the whole company, in different tones, that of Spiagudry betraying extreme alarm.

The exclamation had scarcely escaped their lips, when a loud rapping was heard at the door of the tower.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHANCELLOR, AND HIS MAN OF ALL WORK.

LÆVIG is a large town, situated on the north side of the gulf of Drontheim, and at the foot of a range of hills, which, stripped of trees, and cultivated in small fields of different kinds of grain to their summits, present at a little distance the appearance of a vast mosaic. The aspect of the town is gloomy, and its habitations mean, being composed chiefly of the cabins of the fishermen, the huts of the miners, and the lodges of the hunters. Upon a square, where now nothing is to be seen but a ruin, was, at the time to which we refer, a strong fortress built in days of old by Horda le Fin Archer, the brother of the pagan King Halfdan, and in 1698, occupied by the syndic of the town; who was thus the most proudly lodged of all the inhabitants, except, perhaps, the stork, which every spring made his nest on the lofty tower of the church, like a pearl upon the top of a mandarin's peaked hat.

On the afternoon of the same day that Ordener arrived at Drontheim, a personage, also incognito, disembarked at Lævig. In richly ornamented litter, without armorial bearings, and his four tall lacqueys, armed to the teeth, attracted the attention, and formed the topic of conversation for the inhabitants of the bourg. The host of *Le Mouette d'Or*—the little tavern where the stranger stopped—himself assumed a mysterious air, and to all inquiries, returned his “*I don't know*,” in a manner evidently intended to imply. “*I do know; but you don't, and never will.*” The tall lacqueys were as mute as fish, and as dark as the mouth of a mine. The syndic, who at first remained in dignified retirement at his tower, awaiting the first visit of the stranger, was, subsequently, twice observed to call upon the guest of the *Mouette d'Or*, without obtaining an interview; and in the evening, the same dignitary was seen to salute, very respectfully, the unknown, who sat in the window of his apartment. Hence the people of the burgh were led to infer, that their visitor was some exalted personage, who had imparted the secret of his high rank to the syndic. In the latter part of this supposition, however, they were mistaken. The stranger had sent his passport to the syndic for examination, by a servant. It was simply a permission to the bearer to traverse the realm at his pleasure; but the syndic had observed upon the envelope which inclosed it to him, a green seal, with the armo-

rial bearings and coronet of a count; to which were added the orders of Dannebrog and the Elephant, with the ermine and the hand of justice. This satisfied the syndic of the quality of the traveller; and as he had the warmest desire to obtain from the chancellor, the privilege of serving his country in the capacity of high syndic of Drontheim, he shaped his course accordingly. Unfortunately for him, however, his pains were thrown away, for the count would receive no one.

Toward the close of the second day after his arrival, the host of the *Mouette d'Or* entered the stranger's apartment, and announced that a courier had arrived, who craved an audience with his *lordship*.

“Show him up,” replied the count.

In a few moments the courier made his appearance, and after saluting the stranger with a humble reverence, carefully secured the door, and respectfully awaited the commands of his master.

“I expected you this morning,” was the first remark addressed to him; “what detained you?”

“The interests of your grace, seignior count. What else could detain me?”

“Well, how is Elphaga? how is Fred-eric?”

“They are well, may it please your lordship.”

“Good. But have you nothing else to tell me? What is the news at Drontheim?”

“Nothing, your grace, except that the Baron Thorvic arrived there yesterday.”

“Yes, I know he came to consult that old Mechlenger, Levin, upon the subject of his marriage. Did you hear what was the result of their interview?”

“He had not seen the general, when I left Drontheim, to-day at noon.”

“How, do you say! not seen the general, and arrived at Drontheim yesterday? You astonish me, Musdemon. Had he seen the countess?”

“No, your grace.”

“Did you see him yourself?”

“No, my noble master. Indeed, I do not know him by sight.”

“Why, if no one has seen him, how do you know he is at Drontheim?”

“His servant informed me, seignior; he was at the governor's palace.”

“But where did his master go?”

“To Monckholm, as the valet told me, as, soon after his arrival, he had visited the spladgest.”

“To Monckholm! To Schumacker's prison! Are you certain? I always had my suspicions of honest General Levin

But what could take the Baron Thorvic to Monckholm? Does he want to consult Schumacker also, about his marriage? or what——"

"Noble seignior," interrupted Musdamon, "it is not certain, after all, that he did go to Monckholm."

"Why, what did you tell me just now? are you trifling with me?"

"Heaven forbid, your grace! I only told you what I heard, from his servant; but seignior Frederic, who was officer of the guard at Monckholm, yesterday, says he saw nothing of him."

"That's no evidence. Frederic does not know him; besides, he might have entered the fortress in disguise."

"True, seignior; but your lordship's son says, that no one visited the fortress."

The count hesitated.

"That alters the case," he said at length.

"Are you certain that my son said that?"

"Yes, your grace, he assured me so three different times: and his interest is certainly the same as yours."

The count seemed much relieved by this turn of the case.

"Yes," he continued, "I see how it is now. Ordoner, on his arrival had a mind to take a sail on the gulf, and his lacquey supposed he had gone to Monckholm. Why, this indifference to old Levin seems rather favorable to us, than otherwise. Would you believe it, my dear Musdamon, I really began to fear that Ordoner might be in love with Ethel Schumacker! Yes, I was already, in my own mind, laying the foundation of a romance of love and intrigue, based upon this trip to Monckholm; but, thank Heaven, Ordoner is not so great a fool as I am! By the way, how does this young Danæ fare in master Frederic's hands?"

Musdamon had conceived fears of the same nature as those which had disturbed his master; nor was he by any means able to divest himself of them with the same ease: but he was glad to see the count in good humor, and felt no disposition to alarm him again; he rather inclined, on the contrary, to increase the security which he felt; for the serenity of the great is ever favorable to the comfort and well-being of their dependents.

"Noble count," he replied, "your son has done his devoirs in regard to Schumacker's daughter, but in vain. It seems he has been forestalled in her affections."

"Forestalled!" exclaimed the count, sharply, "and by whom?"

"As to that, I know not, precisely; but

some peasant, serf, or vassal, seignior Frederic says."

"Are you confident of that?" asked the count, whose overcast brow brightened up at this explanation.

"Your lordship's son so assured the noble countess and myself."

The count rose, and paced the chamber rapidly, rubbing his hands with every expression of delight.

"Musdamon—my dear Musdamon!" he exclaimed at length. "One effort more, and all is accomplished. The branch is withered, we have now only to uproot the trunk. Have you any more good news?"

"Dispsolen has been assassinated."

The expression of the count's features became still more exulting:

"Ah, ha!" he cried, "so we go on you see, from triumph to triumph. But are his papers secure? above all, is the steel casket safe?"

"I regret to say, that he did not fall into the hands of any of our people, your grace," replied Musdamon; "he was killed and robbed, on the sands of Urechtal; the deed is attributed to Hans of Iceland."

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated the chancellor, whose countenance was again overcast. "What! the famous brigand, who is to be put at the head of our sham revolt?"

"The same, your grace, though I very much fear, we shall find it difficult to come across him, or make use of him, if we do. However, I have provided for that case. There is a mountaineer of giant stature, as tough as a heart of oak, and as savage as a starved wolf; who will assume his name, and take his place. He will be easily mistaken for the real Hans, who is scarcely ever seen, and known to no one."

"Is the Iclander, then, of colossal stature?"

"That is the popular report, seignior."

"I admire the fertility of your resources, my dear Musdamon; but when is our insurrection to come off?"

"Immediately, your grace—perhaps it has already broken out. The royal tutelage has always been odious to the miners, and they embrace the proposition of a revolt with avidity. The movement is to commence at Guldbranshall, from whence it is to extend to Hindmaer and Kongsberg; two thousand miners can be rallied in three days. Our emissaries have prepared everything, and got up the out-break in the name of Schumacker, whose freedom and restoration to power the revolvers are instructed to demand. The whole province will be shaken; meanwhile, you

are on the spot, and with the troops at hand, and the garrisons of Drontheim and Skongen, can easily crush the rebellion, which will give your grace fresh claims upon the gratitude of the king, and afford you abundant grounds for the destruction of Schumacker, whose treason will appear undeniable. See, my lord, upon what a firm basis the edifice of your greatness will be erected, before it is crowned by the nuptials of your daughter with the son of the viceroy."

The intercourse of two beings thoroughly depraved, is never agreeable, and always as brief as possible. There is something revolting and frightful in the exposure of naked wickedness, which shocks even the criminals themselves; besides which, however secret may be their conference, they are always conscious of the presence of two witnesses. God, whom they do not see, and conscience, which they do feel.

The confidential communications of Musdamon were always painful to the count, because, he was always made to feel that he was himself the principal in all his schemes of guilt. There are courtiers, who take upon themselves to suggest, and leave their patrons the salvo to their conscience, that they only yielded to the advice or entreaty of an evil counselor. Not so Musdamon: with such address did he play his part, that he never seemed to suggest, but always draw the suggestion from his master, and never embarked in any plot, involving danger, that he did not manage to commit the chancellor as deeply as himself. Of this, he well knew that the count was aware, and that except that of Schumacker, there was no head that he would so willingly bring to the scaffold as his. When to this it is added, that the count also knew that Musdamon fully understood his position, and his real disposition toward him, the feelings of the parties may be better imagined than described.

The count had now gained all the information that he wished, and became impatient to rid himself of his familiar:

"MUSDAMON," he said, "you are the most faithful and zealous of all my adherents; whatever I intrust to your management, is always well done. I make you the private secretary of the chancery."

MUSDAMON made a humble reverence.

"And this is not all," continued the count; "I will a third time solicit for you, the honor of the order of Dannebrog, though I fear that the want of family de-

scend, and the situation of one of your relations, will defeat my application."

MUSDAMON turned red and pale, alternately, but strove to conceal his confusion by another low obeisance.

"Come," continued the count, extending his hand; "make your acknowledgments for the post you have got, and some day, when his majesty is in particularly good humor, who knows what he may do?"

"Whatever it may please his majesty to do," replied Musdamon, kissing the extended hand, "I shall always feel the deepest gratitude to your grace."

"Well, now make haste, and get everything ready for my departure; for I must see this Hans of Iceland as soon as possible."

MUSDAMON retired, but before he shut the door, his master recalled him, and said:

"I had forgotten—let your first official act as secretary be, to write to the chancery, and tell them, in my name, to dismiss from office the syndic of Lævig, for degrading his station, by servility to strangers of whom he knows nothing."

CHAPTER XIV.

ORDONER AND SPIAGUDRY PURSUE THEIR TRAVELS.

"YES, master, we really ought to make a pilgrimage to the hermitage of Lynrass. Only to think, that the worthy anchorite, who terrified me so much, and who I cursed so deeply in my heart, should turn out to be our guardian angel."

Such were the terms in which Benignus Spiagudry was expressing to his master, the gratitude and admiration which he felt for the mysterious hermit, who had been their supper companion. Our travellers had left the tower, some three hours before, and were now pursuing their course up a mountainous path, obstructed by frequent ravines, and rocks washed down by the torrents. It was not yet day; but the northern lights enabled them, though somewhat indistinctly, to discover the trees and other objects about them, and to pursue the right direction toward the place of their destination.

This was the first time they had broken silence—for Ordoner, who had only taken a few brief hours of repose the night before, in a fishing-boat, which lay by the wharf at Drontheim, had sunk into a reverie, which resembled sleep in everything except that he had, for three hours past, mechanically followed the footsteps of his guide. He had even dreamed, and was at

the moment Spiagudry addressed him, back at Monckholm, with Ethel by his side. The toils of the route—the fatigue and danger that was before him, were all forgotten. All difficulties had been overcome, and he was happy. The old man's observations, though uttered in a tone sufficiently loud, failed to bring him back to the harsh realities about him.

"Master!" repeated Spiagudry in a still louder tone, which, joined to the rude attaint of the bough of a tree with which he came in contact, brought Ordoner to his senses. "Master, don't be afraid—the archers took the right hand road with the hermit, when we left the tower. Silence is prudent, to be sure, in some cases; but it is quite safe to speak now."

"I should think it was," replied Ordoner, yawning, "as it must be some three hours since we and those you fear, have been going in different directions."

"True, seignior; but still, prudence is a good thing. Suppose I had declared myself, when the chief of the archers asked for Benignus Spiagudry, in a voice like that of Saturn, calling for his latest born, that he might eat him for breakfast? Where think you I should be now?"

"Faith, old man; I doubt whether the hot pincers of our friend, the executioner, would have extracted your name then."

"Well; was I wrong, master? If I had said a word, I should have hindered the hermit from coming to our relief. He asked the chief of the squad, whether his archers belonged to the regiment of Monckholm; a trivial question, just to gain time. But did you observe, seignior, when the stupid archer answered, 'yes,' with what a singular smile the hermit told him to follow him, and he would show him where Benignus Spiagudry had concealed himself?"

Here the old keeper had to stop, in order to launch out again in praise of his unexpected protector.

"Worthy, excellent, pious hermit!" he exclaimed; "what an example of christian virtue and benevolence; and I, like a fool, was scared at the rough manners and pleasantry which concealed so generous a soul. Did you notice, seignior, the peculiar tone with which he said to me, '*Au revoir*,' when he departed with the archers? Now, there *was* something startling in that tone, but it is not the holy hermit's fault. I suppose he has been living so long in a damp cave that his voice has grown hoarse. I do know a solitary who speaks in the same tone—but no, I'll not do the hermit of Lynrass the injustice to say so.

Then his gloves—well, there's nothing strange in them, it was a cold evening; and his drink of salt-water—why there's no telling what strange vows these Catholics will make; and then there's a case exactly in point: it is said of Urensus, the hermit of Mount Caucasus, that—

"*Rivos dispiciens maris undam potat amarum*,"

scorning the limpid streams, his drink was the bitter water of the sea. Why did I not think of that line when I was in that cursed tower of Vyglå? it would have saved me a world of alarm. But one cannot recollect themselves at the table of a hangman—a human butcher—a being execrated by all living—one who only differs from an assassin in the frequency and impunity of his bloody deeds. And to think of his handing you food and drink with the same hands that wield his instruments of torture, and crush the bones of his victims, and pour out their blood like water! Why, the meanest beggar would cast off the rags which protected him from the cold, if they were polluted by his touch. And the chancellor, when he signs the patent of his appointment, throws the parchment under the table in disgust. In France, when the hangman dies, the provost sergeants willingly pay a heavy fine rather than succeed him. Chorchill, who was condemned to death at Pesth, when offered his life on condition of exercising this office, preferred to be the patient rather than the operator. Is it not well known, also, that Turmyryn, the bishop of Maestricht, had the cathedral purified throughout because an executioner had chanced to pollute it with his presence? And did not the Czarina Petrowna wash her face every time she saw an execution? You know also——"

"Do n't you hear the tread of a horse coming this way?" interrupted Ordoner.

They turned, and as the dawn had made considerable progress during the long and scientific discussion in which Spiagudry had indulged, they were enabled to perceive a man, clothed in black, mounted on one of the rough ponies which are so common in Norway. He beckoned to them with one hand, while, with the other, he quickened the pace of the little animal he was bestriding.

"Run, seignior, run!" exclaimed the old man. "That man in black looks marvelously like an archer!"

"Nonsense! Why should we two run from one man?"

"Ah, my master, twenty sparhawks fly before one owl! What should we gain by opposing an officer of justice?"

"And what makes you think this is an officer?" replied Ordoner, whose eyes, undisturbed by fear of justice, had begun to recognize their pursuer. "Stop—stop! do not be alarmed; I know this man."

They came to a halt, and the moment after the cavalier joined them; and Spiagudry ceased to tremble when he perceived that it was the good chaplain Athunasius Munder.

The clergyman reined in his horse, and as soon as he could recover breath, accosted them with a benevolent smile:

"My children," he said, "it is on your account I have turned back, and I trust that the Lord will not permit my errand to be in vain."

"Seignior almoner," replied Ordoner, "in what can we serve you? It will give us great pleasure if we can do so."

"My purpose was rather to be of service to you. Will you deign to inform me where you are going, and the nature of your errand?"

"Reverend sir, I cannot!"

"I was in hopes," replied the clergyman, "that you would meet me with confidence, and not with distrust. I am unhappy, indeed, if I have, at first sight, inspired you with suspicion."

"Not so," returned Ordoner, moved by the meek and humble air of the good man—"not so, my father: but there are reasons why I can tell you nothing further of my route, than that I am bound to the mountains of the north."

"I thought so, noble seignior, and for that reason I have pursued you. The miners and hunters in those wild regions often give travellers much trouble."

"And what then, father?"

"Why, then, my son, though I had no hopes of turning you back from your dangerous journey, it did occur to me that I might be of some service to you, if you prosecuted it. This unhappy coiner, whom, upon the scaffold, I trust I this day reconciled to his God, was a miner. A moment before his death he put into my hands this parchment, inscribed with his name, and assured me that it would protect me from all harm whenever I had occasion to travel in the mountains. Alas! what would that avail me? whose life is spent with the dying and the dead, and who, '*inter castra latro-num*,' in a den of thieves itself, would make use of no other defence than prayer—the true weapon of the children of God. I did not refuse it, for I would not hurt the feelings of any one who would soon have nothing to give or receive on earth; and I now see that God himself inspired me to take

it, for your sake, that it might be a safeguard to you in your perilous career; take it, and I pray that the gift of the dying may be the defence of the living."

Ordoner received the parchment respectfully from the hand of the minister:

"I thank you, reverend sir," he said, "and trust your prayers may be heard; nevertheless," he continued, placing his hand on the hilt of his sword, "I think, after all, this is my best passport."

"My young friend," replied the minister, "that frail parchment may prove a better protection than the most trenchant steel; the humble look of the penitent is more powerful than the sword of the archangel. But I must return to those in bondage. Will you sometimes breathe a prayer for them and me?"

"Reverend sir," replied Ordoner with a smile, "I have promised, that those for whom you interest yourself shall be pardoned, and I will keep my word."

"My son, do not speak with such confidence; it is like tempting the Lord. No mere man knoweth the heart of another; how then can you answer for the son of the viceroy? Alas! perhaps he will not even deign to admit a humble almoner to his presence. Adieu, my son; may your undertaking be prospered, and do not forget the poor almoner and his prisoners."

CHAPTER XV.

MORE TENANTS FOR THE SPLADGEST.

In an apartment of the palace, three of the governor's secretaries were seated at a table covered with papers, parchments, and writing materials; a fourth seat which was vacant, gave token that one of their colleagues was absent. After pursuing their work for some time in silence, one of them cried out:

"Whapperny, do you know that the bishop has dismissed poor old Doctor Fox-tiff from the office of librarian, in compliance with the letter you wrote, recommending the petition of Doctor Anglivius?"

"What is that, Richard?" exclaimed one of the others. "Whapperny never could have written to that effect, for the general was evidently disgusted with the petition when he heard it read."

"So I thought, myself," remarked Whapperny; "but when I came to examine the petition I found he had written on it, '*tribuetur*'—let it be granted."

"Is it possible?" cried the other.

"Yes; and that was not the only one, concerning which, he seemed to have

changed his mind. For instance, on the miners' petition, he wrote '*negatur*'—rejected."

"Well, that is incomprehensible to me. I thought the general was disposed to avoid trouble with the miners."

"Perhaps he is inclined to adopt a severe course with them; and, what makes me think that more probable, he has also rejected the petition of Athanasius Munder, who asked for the pardon of a dozen condemned prisoners, upon the occasion of the great nuptials, which are to be celebrated."

"Now, that I cannot believe," exclaimed the secretary, to whom Whapperny addressed himself; "the governor is so lenient himself, and so fond of extending his clemency to the convicts."

"Well, satisfy yourself, Arthur," replied the other, putting the paper into his hands.

Arthur took it, and saw, but too plainly, the fatal negative appended to the benevolent request of the almoner.

"Truly!" he exclaimed, "I can scarcely believe my own eyes! I'll place this before the governor again, myself. When were these strange decisions made?"

"Some three days ago."

"Ah, yes," observed Richard; "the very morning of the mysterious arrival and departure of the Baron Ordoner."

"See here, too," exclaimed Whapperny, "he has written '*tribuatur*' on the absurd petition of that old devil, Benignus Spiagudry."

"Has not he disappeared mysteriously, also?" inquired another.

"Yes; and a body has been found in his charnel-house, so shamefully mutilated, that orders have been given to arrest him, on a charge of sacrilege. A little Laplander, however, who acted as his assistant, says he was carried off by the devil, and that is the general belief of the populace."

"Well, he has left a good reputation behind him, at all events," said Whapperny, with a laugh.

At this moment, the fourth secretary made his appearance.

"Upon my honor, you have taken your time this morning, Gustavus," said one of his colleagues. "Did you chance to get married yesterday?"

"Oh no," chimed in another; "I know what detained him: he was obliged to go out of his way, to exhibit his new mantle under the windows of Mademoiselle Rosalie."

"You are mistaken, Whapperny," re-

plied the new-comer; "I have not been so agreeably occupied; nor do I think my new mantle would have much effect upon the persons I have been to see."

"Well, where have you been, then?" inquired Arthur.

"To the spladgest."

"By heaven! we were just talking about that infernal hole! But, though it may make an amusing topic of conversation I should not think it a very attractive place to visit."

"And much less, to tarry so long at," added Arthur. "But, my dear fellow, what took you there? and what did you see?"

"Oh yes," replied Gustavus; "you are anxious to hear, though you won't take the trouble to go and see. Now I should serve you right not to describe these horrors, which you could not look at without shuddering."

The three secretaries surrounded their colleague, and urged him to explain himself, which, in truth, he was quite as anxious to do as they were to hear him."

"Well, Whapperny," he said at last, "you can transmit my description to your young sister, who is so fond of the horrible. I was almost forced into the spladgest by a crowd, which accompanied the bodies of three soldiers of Monckholm, and two royal archers, which were found dead at the foot of the cliff of Cascadthymore. 'Tis said they were the same who, three nights ago, set out in pursuit of Benignus Spiagudry, who was charged with sacrilege. If this is true, it is impossible to conceive how so many armed men could be assassinated; yet the nature of their injuries seem to show that they were precipitated from the cliff, under which they were found. The sight is enough to make one's hair stand on end."

"You saw them there, Gustavus?"

"Saw them! I see them yet, they are constantly before my eyes."

"Is there any suspicion who are the authors of this deed?"

"At first, it was thought to have been committed by a band of miners; and the howl of the archers was heard upon the cliff no longer ago than yesterday."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Arthur.

"That supposition cannot be correct, however," continued Gustavus, "for there are neither mines nor miners in that quarter."

"Who can it be, then?"

"No one knows. If the bodies were not entire, it might be supposed that their lives were destroyed by wild beasts, for

upon them were deep gashes, as if torn by claws. And that is the case, also, with the body of an old man, with a white beard, which was brought to the spladgest day before yesterday; on the night after that dreadful storm which hindered you, my dear Leander Whapperny, from crossing the gulf, to visit your sweetheart at Lynrass."

"Never mind that," said Whapperny, with a laugh; "tell us who was the old man with a white beard."

"By his stature, his beard, and a chapel, which was clenched in his hands—though he had been stripped of everything else—it is supposed to be the body of an old anchorite, who went by the name of the Hermit of Lynrass. It is evident that he was murdered; but for what end, no one can imagine. People are no longer butchered for their religious opinions, and this old hermit was an inoffensive creature, who had nothing but his coarse and simple garments, and the good-will of all who knew him."

"And do you say that his body was marked also, as if it had been torn by a wild beast?"

"Yes: and an old fisherman who was there assured me, that the body of the officer who was assassinated at the sands of Urchtal, was mangled in the same way."

"That is very singular," remarked Richard.

"Frightful!" exclaimed Arthur.

Come," said Whapperny, "let us get to work—the general will be here directly. I should like to see those bodies, Gustavus, and if you have a mind, we will stop in at the spladgest when we go home to-night."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WIDOW, AND THE FIEND IN HUMAN FORM.

' In the year of grace 1673, that is to say, about twenty-four years before the epoch of our tale, the little hamlet of Theoctree was the scene of a gay and joyous festival, in honor of the wedding of the sweet Lucy Penryh, and the gallant and handsome Carrol Stadt, each of whom was the pride of their village. They had long been lovers, and there was not a heart in the neighborhood that did not warm with delight, at the thought that this handsome couple were at last to realize their ardent hopes, which had been so long delayed. Born in the same hamlet, and living near neighbors, their infancy was spent together. Often when a boy, wearied with play,

had Carrol rested his head upon Lucy's bosom; and frequently in after days, had Lucy, when returning from her pastoral duties, supported her tired footsteps, by the aid of Carrol's stalwart arm. Lucy was the most modest and beautiful of the village maidens; Carrol was the bravest and most athletic of the youth. It was but natural that they should love each other; and they could no more recollect when their mutual love commenced, than when they commenced to live.

But the course of true love ran no smoother in their case than it is said to do in that of others—family interests, the dissensions of their parents, and numberless other obstacles had long retarded their union. Carrol suffered patiently for Lucy's sake, and she returned his constancy with a similar degree of resolution, in the hope that one day their joys and sorrows might be the same.

It was by saving her from imminent peril at last, that Carrol obtained his Lucy's hand. Cries of distress had been one day heard in the woods near the village, and it was soon discovered that Lucy had fallen into the hands of a strange marauder, who was the terror of the mountains; a monster, who in many of his traits, as well as in the fearful sound of his voice, rather resembled a wild beast than a human being. No one had ever dared to cross his path, for no one who had ever met him had lived to tell the tale. But Carrol, whom love endowed with the strength of a lion, pursued the fiend as he was carrying his prey up the mountains, and, with God's help, wrested his beloved from her ravisher. He returned her to her father, who rewarded him with her hand.

The whole village as we have said made merry at their nuptials. The countenance of the bride alone was overclouded. She did not look the less lovingly upon the partner of her choice, but the sweetness of her smile was coupled with something, which betokened, not only sadness, but almost despair;—in vain did her happy husband strive to cheer her, in vain did he assure her that the coming of this monster should be regarded as a blessing, inasmuch as it had been the means of uniting them for ever. She shook her head, but answered not a word.

The night came, and the newly married pair were conducted to their bridal chamber, after which the neighbors continued their rejoicings until the dawn.

In the morning Carrol Stadt had disappeared—some time after, a few words in his hand-writing, were delivered to the father

of Lucy by a mountaineer, who had met him, wandering upon the shores of the gulf: the father showed the writing to the syndic, and the clergyman, but what its purport was—was never further known. To the gayety of the fete succeeded a corresponding degree of gloom, and the unhappy Lucy was left alone in her despair.

It was in vain that an explanation was sought for this mysterious catastrophe, which struck such consternation into the village:—masses were said for the soul of Carrol Stadt, in the same church which, a short time before, had resounded to the canticles sung on the occasion of his marriage. What sustained the widow under this affliction, no one knew, but in the ninth month of her marriage, she gave birth to a son, and on the same day the village of Golyn was destroyed by the falling of a huge cliff which overhung it.

The birth of her son by no means dissipated the gloom which surrounded the unhappy mother. The boy did not, in the least, resemble Carrol; and his wayward and ungovernable temper during infancy, gave promise of a manhood of turbulence and ferocity. At times a wild and savage-looking being, of low stature, who was recognized by the peasants, who regarded him in terror at a distance, as Hans of Iceland, visited the desolate cabin of the widow; from which was heard to issue upon such occasions, a frightful noise, like the mingled wailings of a woman, and the roaring of a tiger. Sometimes, this stranger would bear off the infant Gill, whom he would keep with him in the mountains for months together, and then again return him to his mother.

The widow herself, seemed to regard her son with mingled emotions of tenderness and horror. At times she would fold him to her heart, as if he were the sole tie that bound her to life; and at others, she would put him from her with every appearance of terror and disgust, while she called upon the name of Carrol, her dear, her long lost Carrol. To no human being, however, did she ever reveal the cause of her strange demeanor.

When Gill Stadt had arrived at the age of twenty-three, he fell desperately in love with Guth Sterson; but she was rich, and he was poor. To acquire the means of obtaining her hand, he went to the mines of Rærass to work, and from that day his mother had never seen him more.

One night, not long after the commencement of our story, the widow sat at her distaff, by means of which she gained her scanty support. The lamp burned dim at

her side, and shed a faint light upon the gloomy walls of her cabin—those mute witnesses of her mysterious nuptial eve, which seemed to have grown old and desolate like herself. She was anxiously thinking of her son, whose presence, now so ardently desired, but too often added to her affliction—yet, ungrateful and harsh as he was, she loved him: how could she do otherwise, when for him she had suffered all things?

She rose from her work, and opening an old chest, took from it a crucifix which had been carefully wrapped up. She held it for a moment before her, with an air of devotion, and then shuddering cast it from her. "How can I pray, and to whom?" she exclaimed, in accents of terror and despair. "Oh! wretch that I am, to hell I appertain, and to the powers of darkness alone can I address my supplications."

The unhappy woman fell back into her seat, apparently in a stupor, from which, after some time, she was aroused by a knocking at the door. This was an event of rare occurrence at the widow's cabin, for, in consideration of what had befallen her, and her strange course of life, the inhabitants of Theoctree had for years regarded her as one who dealt with evil spirits; or in other words, her misfortunes had acquired for her the same reputation that Spiagudry had obtained by his pursuit of natural science.

"It may be my son," she exclaimed, as she sprang toward the door. Alas! it was not. The visitor was a hermit of low stature, clad in a robe of serge, the hood of which permitted nothing of his countenance to be seen but a long black beard.

"Holy man, what ask you?" inquired the widow; and added, before he could reply, "You know not to what house you have come."

"Indeed!" cried the hermit, throwing off his robe, his gloves and his black beard. His harsh voice, his atrocious visage, and his hands garnished with huge claws were but too well known to the widow.

The wretched woman hid her face in her hands, and uttered a shriek of dismay.

"Well!" exclaimed the monster, "how is this? Have you not, in four-and-twenty years, learned to look with pleasure upon the husband to whom you are bound through all eternity?"

"Eternity!" she repeated, with a shudder.

"Listen, Lucy Penryh, I bring you tidings of your son."

"Of my son—oh! where is he? Why does he not return?"

"He cannot."

"But tell me of him—tell me of him, and I will thank you if you bring me good news of him."

"It will be good news to you," muttered the false hermit, in an under tone, "for you are a spiritless wretch, and I have always wondered how you ever bore such a son. You have always feared that he would follow in my footsteps—rejoice then, for he never will."

"What!" exclaimed the delighted mother, "has my son become changed?"

"Oh, very much changed."

"Then why is he not here? Where is he, and what is he doing?"

"Sleeping."

The widow, in the excess of her joy at the supposed reformation of her son, did not observe the sinister smile which accompanied this answer, but continued earnestly—

"Why did you not wake him, and bring him along with you?"

"He slept too sound."

"But when will he return? when shall I see my dear Gill again?"

The false hermit drew from under his doublet, a cup of singular form and appearance. "Here, widow," he said, extending it to her, "drink to the speedy return of your son."

The widow pushed it away with horror; it was a human skull! she could not utter a syllable.

"Ah! ha!" exclaimed the monster, in a voice which resembled the snarl of an angry tiger: "Do you turn away your head, woman? You asked to see your son; this is all that remains of him."

He placed again the naked skull to her lips.

It might have been supposed that this last misfortune, and the awful manner in which it was announced to her, would have broken the heart of the miserable mother; but that heart had already been too deeply scarred by trouble. She looked upon her destroyer, with a fixed and stupid gaze, and only muttered, "Death! death! oh! why cannot I die?"

"Die, if you will," was his reply. "But, recollect Lucy Penryh, that when the demon folded you in his embrace in the woods of Theotree, you became his for ever. I am that demon, and through eternity, you are my wife. Now, die if you will."

The belief in Norway, at the time of our story, was universally prevalent, that infernal spirits, from time to time, took upon themselves the human form, and dwelt

among men, for purposes of crime and devastation. The most dreaded of these awful beings, was Hans of Iceland. It was also believed that if a woman, whether by seduction or violence, became the victim of one of these demons in the shape of man, that calamity alone made her the partaker of his eternal doom of woe.

The reply of the false hermit, recalled the widow to her recollection. "Alas!" she exclaimed, despairingly; "Is there no annihilation for me? Cannot I escape existence! And what have I done? Carrol, my beloved Carrol! you know my innocence. How could the feeble strength of a young girl, resist the power of a fiend from hell? And you my son, though conceived in misery, and born in wretchedness, though you never returned my love when a child, or gave me your protection and support, when arrived to years of manhood, still, at this day your death seems to me the most insupportable of my sorrows: my son! alas, my son!"

"Weak and miserable woman," muttered the hermit, and then continued in a louder tone: "Cease grieving; I have already done so; while you weep for your son, I avenge him. This girl to whom he was attached, and for whose sake he lost his life, in the accursed mines of Rærass, was false to him. Gill's rival was a soldier of the garrison of Monckholm. The whole regiment shall perish by my sword, the work of destruction is commenced already—behold!" He stripped back his sleeves, and displayed his hands covered with blood.

"Yes," he continued, "the spirit of Gill may even now rejoice, when it visits the landing-place of Urchtal, and the gorges of Cascadthymore. Be comforted woman, do you see the blood?"

All at once, as if he recalled to mind something that had escaped him, he exclaimed; "Did you receive a steel casket from me? I've sent you gold, and I bring you blood; if that will not appease your grief, you are not human."

The widow, lost in despair, took no heed to his discourse.

"Come," continued the monster; "are you speechless? then you are not a woman:" he shook her by the arm. "Did any one bring you a steel casket, from me?"

The widow, half aroused, but still hardly conscious, shook her head, and relapsed into her former state.

"Ah! ha! the wretch has proved unfaithful," exclaimed her questioner. "Spigadry, that gold shall cost you dear."

He then threw off his hermit's robe, and started out of the cabin, with a yell like that of a hyena which scents its prey.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

WHILE Ethel was counting the days of her lover's absence, and vainly endeavoring to conjecture the period of his return, Ordoner and his guide were pursuing their journey toward the haunt of the brigand.

The coast of Norway so abounds in gulfs, and bays, and corresponding headlands, that to attempt to enumerate them, would be an endless task. In former times according to popular belief, every one of these capes and isthmuses was tenanted by a demon, a fairy, or a saint; and on the whole coast of Keole, for some miles north of the Walderhog, there was but one portion of territory which was not haunted by some spirit, either of good or of evil. Over this, towered high and lofty rocks, upon whose summit may still be discovered the ruins of the castle of Ralph, or Radulph, the giant. This wild but beautiful meadow, inclosed by the rocks on the one side, and the water on the other; owed its exemption from supernatural visitations, solely to the terror of the name of its former possessor, one of the ancient seakings of the north; for what fairy, devil, or even saint, would dare to encroach upon the domain protected by Radulph the giant?

True it is, that the neighboring people experienced a certain degree of awe, in approaching the deserted seat of this ancient ruler of the sea, and terror of the land; but the recollection of the departed is by no means so appalling as their presence; and the fisherman benighted, and driven to seek shelter in the calm bayou, which set up upon its eastern side; had never seen the witch-fire, sporting and dancing upon the lawn—the fairy driving in her phosphorescent car, over the tree-tops, or the saint, in attitude of prayer, sailing upward toward heaven, in the light of the pale cold moon.

If, however, on the night following that of the great storm, which we have described, any weather-beaten mariner had brought his bark to anchor in the hospitable bay of Ralph the giant, he might have been led to suppose that some change had occurred to the character of this place of refuge, if it had not indeed been invaded by the prince of the power of the air.

About a huge fire, in the middle of the meadow, were seated three men, who, to judge from their appearance, were quite as capable of working ill, as the more dreaded beings of another nature, who were supposed to tenant the neighboring straits and islands. Two of these men, wore the high felt caps and loose trowsers of the royal miners; their arms were naked to the shoulder, on their feet were heavy yellow boots, while about their waists were sashes of crimson, which sustained their heavy sabres and long pistols. One of them was old, and the other young; both wore a savage and turbulent expression of countenance, which was rather increased than otherwise, by the thick and shaggy beard of the elder, and the long elf locks of the youth. Their companion wore a cap of buckskin, and a doublet of tanned leather—his short breeches left his knees exposed, and on his feet was lashed, with thongs, sandals with cork-wood soles—on his back was slung his musket and ammunition, and in his hand was a sharp and heavy axe. He was evidently a mountaineer of the north of Norway.

The appearance of these men, as the fire, agitated by the wind, threw its light upon their figures and countenances, was sufficiently formidable, without imagining them spectres or demons; and they might readily have been taken for brigands, without any uncommon stretch of the fancy. As they sat around the fire, they frequently turned their heads toward the path, which led, through the woods, to the castle of Ralph the giant; and from such snatches of their conversation as the wind would permit one to hear, it was evident that they were expecting the coming of a fourth to their party.

"We should not be permitted to wait the coming of this agent of Count Griffenfeldt so quietly in the neighboring meadow of the will-o'-the-wisp, Tulbytilbet, or in the bay of St. Cuthbert, down below there, should we, Kennybol?" exclaimed the oldest of the miners.

"Hush! Jonas," replied the mountaineer, "don't talk so loud; blessed be Ralph the giant, under whose protection we are. Heaven forbid that I should ever set foot in the meadow of Tulbytilbet again. It was but a few days since, I went there to gather haws; by chance I pulled up a mandrake, and it bled, and uttered such screams, that I was frightened nearly out of my senses."

The young miner burst into a hearty laugh.

"Really, Kennybol," he said, "if you

tell such tales, I shall think the mandrake has driven you mad in earnest."

"No more mad than yourself," replied the mountaineer. "Jonas, he jests about the mandrake, like a fool laughing at a death's-head."

"Hum!" said Jonas; "we had better go to the grotto of Waldenhog, where the death's-heads of those whom Hans of Iceland has murdered, dance about his bed every night, and chatter their teeth to lull him to sleep."

"That's a fact, they do," responded the mountaineer.

"But," said the young miner, "has not this Seignior Hacket, whom you are waiting for, promised that Hans of Iceland shall put himself at the head of our insurrection?"

"He has so promised," answered Ken-nybol; "and, with the assistance of this demon, we shall be sure to vanquish all the green-coats in Drontheim, and Copenhagen also."

"So much the better," observed the old miner; "nevertheless, I should not like to stand guard in the night anywhere near him."

At this moment, a rustling was heard among the bushes. The three companions turned their heads toward the path, and soon discovered, by the firelight, the approach of the person they expected.

"'Tis him!" they exclaimed; "'tis Seignior Hacket. Welcome, seignior! we have been waiting for you this hour or more."

Seignior Hacket was a man of low stature, but inclining to *embonpoint*. He was clad in a suit of black velvet, and his countenance wore a constant smile, which still could not conceal a certain sinister and disagreeable expression which lurked beneath it.

"My good friends," he exclaimed, "I was delayed by my ignorance of the route, and by the necessity of great caution in my movements. I left Count Schumacker this morning. See—here are three purses of gold which he has sent you."

The two elders clutched the gold with as much avidity, as would have done almost any one in that poor and barren part of Norway. The young miner rejected the proffered purse which Hacket extended to him.

"Keep your money, seignior," he said. "I should deceive you, if I led you to suppose I revolved in behalf of your Count Schumacker, for I do not. I am a revolter for the purpose of delivering the miners from the royal tutelage, and in the hope that I shall gain the means of providing better for my old mother."

Not in the least disconcerted by this rough reply, Seignior Hacket rejoined, with a smile:

"Take the money for your poor mother then, my dear Norbith, and then you will be able to provide for her at once."

The young man consented, and the wily agent hastened to continue:

"Do not, however, repeat, openly, that you are not in arms for Schumacker Count Griffenfeldt; it will injure the cause."

"However," observed the old miner, "that is really the case. We know that the miners are oppressed by the royal tutelage, and we wish to be delivered from it; but we know nothing of this prisoner, your Count——"

"What do I hear?" interrupted the seignior, warmly; "is it possible that you can be so ungrateful? While you were toiling in the mines, deprived of the light of day, and ground to the earth by the burthens of the royal tutelage, who came to your relief?—who raised your drooping spirits?—who supplied you with arms and money, at the peril of his own life?—who, but my noble master, the Count of Griffenfeldt—who is, himself, enslaved and imprisoned by the same power which oppresses you? And after all this, will you refuse to aid him, in return, to obtain his liberty with your own?"

"You are right!" exclaimed Norbith; "that would indeed be acting basely."

"True, true, Seignior Hacket," added the elder; "we will fight for Count Schumacker."

"That's right, my friends! rise in his behalf, and proclaim the name of your patron from one end of Norway to the other. In every quarter, your noble enterprise will be seconded. From your most formidable enemy you will soon be delivered. The secret influence of my master, Count Griffenfeldt, will soon procure the recall of General Levin de Knud, the only officer of distinction and talent in the province. Who can oppose you? Tell me now, Ken-nybol, Jonas, and you, my dear Norbith, are your comrades ready to take arms?"

"My brethren of Guldbrands shall await my signal at any moment; to-morrow, if you will," replied Norbith.

"To-morrow be it then. It is desirable that your young miners should be the first to lift the standard. And you, my brave Jonas?"

"Six hundred braves from the mines of Færøer, who have lived for the last three days on Chamois' flesh and bear's fat, in the forest of Bennialloy, will fall in at the first sound of their old captain's horn."

"That is well—and you, Kennybol?"

"Every axe-bearer in the mountains of Keole, stands ready to strike with his brothers, the miners, when they need his aid."

"Good! Now inform your companions that victory is certain; for they are to be led to the field by Hans of Iceland."

"Is that certain?" exclaimed all three, in various tones of mingled hope and fear.

"Four days from this time," replied the envoy, "at this hour, I will meet you three and your united bands in the mine of Apsyl Corth, near the lake of Smiasen, beneath the field of the blue-stone. Hans of Iceland shall accompany me."

"We will be there," replied the conspirators; "and may God not desert us for seeking aid of the fiend."

"Do n't trouble yourselves about God," replied the envoy with a sneer. "But stay! in the old ruins, upon the crag, you will find suitable banners. Do not forget your war-cry: 'Schumacker! Schumacker to the rescue!' Well, it is time for us to separate: daybreak is near at hand. But, in the first place, swear inviolable secrecy as to all that has taken place between us."

Before making a reply, the three chiefs each pierced a vein in his arm, with the point of his sabre; then seizing the hand of the envoy, they permitted a few drops of blood to flow into it, and exclaimed with one voice, "You have our blood!"

Then, the young man taking upon himself the office of spokesman, pronounced in a solemn tone the following form of adjuration:

"May all my blood flow as do these drops; may the foul fiend thwart all my undertakings; may my arm be powerless in avenging my injuries; may the bats make their nests in my sepulchre; may I be haunted by the dead while living, and outraged by the living when dead; may my eyes rain tears like a woman's, if I ever reveal what has passed in this meadow of Ralph the giant. Deign, blessed saints, to hear me. Amen." "And so say we," added the elders.

They parted, and nothing remained in the meadow but the half-burnt fire, which now and then gleamed up, and shed an uncertain light upon the ruined tower of Ralph the giant.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAVELLERS CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY, AND APPROACH ITS CLOSE.

BENIGNUS Spiagudry was very much at a loss to conceive to what end his employer, a young man of so much promise, and

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apparently so well to do in the world, had embarked in so desperate an undertaking as that he had in hand; and he was by no means deficient, either in the number or the ingenuity of his attempts to obtain satisfaction upon this point. But the young adventurer was on his guard, and the old man was obliged to submit to disappointment in regard to that, as well as to some other matters concerning which he was desirous of obtaining information. For instance, he did not yet know who his voluntary patron was; and to a query as to his name, family, and position in life, he received for an answer, in tones that effectually put the check to his curiosity: "Call me Ordoner, and inquire no further." So they pursued their way, each keeping his own secrets; for Benignus himself had one—namely, the possession of the mysterious steel casket, concerning the security of which he was very sensitive.

Although it was four days since they had quitted Drontheim, they had by no means accomplished a four days' journey; partly because of the havoc committed upon the roads by the late storm, but principally in consequence of the apprehensions of Benignus, who conducted his companion over the most circuitous routes, in order to avoid, as far as possible, all the towns and villages. Leaving Skongen on their right, they had arrived on the evening of the fourth day, at the lake of Sparbo.

A sombre, but magnificent sight, did this vast sheet of water present to the eyes of our travellers. The last gleam of day was expiring, the first and brightest stars were appearing, and the placid surface of the lake deeply shadowed by the surrounding trees and cliffs, reflected back their lustre like a mirror of steel. One might almost have imagined, coming unexpectedly upon the scene, that he stood upon the brink of some abyss, which, passing through the earth, exhibited the firmament beneath his feet.

Ordoner paused awhile, to contemplate the view which was spread before him. The high banks which inclosed the lake, were clothed with ancient Druidical oaks; on a side hill was the village of Sparbo, its wretched huts scattered heedlessly about, like a flock of sheep pursued by wolves. From a distance, was heard the roaring of forges, accompanied by the sighing of the wind through the black pines which surrounded them, the wild cry of the night-birds, and grave melody of the waterfalls. To the north, an immense cliff of granite reared its hoary head crowned with ruined towers, as if some giant of another sphere

had dropped his burden there. Its summit was still gilded by the rays of the sun, which had long since set to the little village of Ælma, which reposed in quiet at its feet.

Such scenes are soothing to those who are sad of soul, and Ordoner remained gazing, motionless and silent as a statue, for so long a period, that his companion began to be impatient :

"Really, seignior, you must be highly delighted to remain so long in meditation beside the most agree-breeding lake in Norway !"

This remark and the gesture with which it was accompanied, might have drawn a smile from any one but a lover who had just parted with his mistress, and knew not that he should ever see her more. Seeing that it was lost upon Ordoner, however, the old man continued :

"Allow me to remind you, seignior, that the day is fast closing, and we have no time to lose, if we are to reach Ælma before dark."

There was so much sense in what his companion said, that Ordoner continued his route without further delay, accompanied by the old man, who expatiated at length upon the treasures of natural science, botanical, and mineralogical, that the vicinity of the lake of Sparbo presented for the investigation of the philosopher.

"Hear me, noble seignior !" he exclaimed : "If you will but be advised by one old enough to be your father, give up this ill-advised undertaking of yours. Yes, seignior, give it up, and let us tarry a while on the borders of this lake, so abundant in objects of interest and curiosity, and devote ourselves to scientific pursuits. We may discover that extraordinary plant the *stella canora palustris*, the existence of which is doubted by many learned savans ; but which the bishop of Arngheim affirms, that he both saw and gathered, on the banks of the lake of Sparbo. Besides, think what a satisfaction it will be to live on the soil, which is to a greater extent than any other in the north, impregnated with gypsum. Have these considerations no weight with you, my young master ? Oh ! listen to me, and renounce your foolish adventure. I beg your pardon, but so it is ; for in it there is more of peril than of profit—*periculum sine pecunia*. And when you first thought of it, you might better have been thinking of something else."

Ordoner, who paid no attention to what he was saying, answered him only by an occasional nod, or unmeaning monosyllables, such as great talkers are often obli-

ged to put up with in place of reply. And thus they proceeded until they came in sight of the hamlet of Ælma, which seemed just then to be the theatre of some unusual commotion.

The whole population of the place, fishers, hunters and miners, had left their cabins, and were gathered around a little mound upon which stood two men, one of whom sounded a horn, and waved a small black and white banner over the heads of the surrounding crowd.

"Some mountebank or quack," observed Spiagudry ; "one of those wretches doubtless who convert gold into lead, and pimples into plague sores. It is a pity these knaves do not confine their operations to crowned heads, as Borch the Dane and Boni the Milanese did, in the case of our Frederic III. But no, they are equally greedy for the ducats of the king and the deniers of the peasant."

Spiagudry was deceived. Upon their nearer approach, he discovered that the central group was composed of a syndic, in his robes of office, and a number of archers.

The fugitive keeper was troubled, and muttered in a low voice to his companion,

"Indeed, seignior, I had no idea of stumbling on a syndic in this little place. St. Hospice protect us ! what is he about to do ?"

He was not long kept in uncertainty, for the loud voice of the public crier was soon heard making proclamation of an edict which was listened to with religious attention by the bystanders. It ran as follows :

"In the name of his majesty, and by order of his excellency the governor general, Levin de Knud, the high syndic of Drontheim, gives notice to the inhabitants of all cities, towns and boroughs in the province, that a reward of one thousand golden crowns is offered for the head of Hans of Iceland, murderer and incendiary."

An undefined murmur ran through the audience at this announcement.

"2nd. A reward of four golden crowns is offered for the head of Benignus Spiagudry, accused of the crime of sorcery and sacrilege, he being a fugitive from justice."

"3rd. In order to facilitate the execution of this edict it shall be proclaimed by every syndic of the province, throughout his jurisdiction."

The syndic took the edict from the crier and added—

"The lives of these two men may now be taken by whoever wills."

It will readily be believed that this pro-

clamation was listened to with no small degree of emotion, by our timid friend, Spiagudry. So great indeed was his agitation, that he would doubtless have attracted the attention of the bystanders had not all their interest been absorbed in the first clause of the edict.

"A price put upon the head of Hans of Iceland," exclaimed an old fisherwoman; "they might as well set a price on the head of Beelzebub."

"To keep up a fair proportion," remarked a mountaineer, "they should offer five hundred crowns for one horn of the last mentioned fiend."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed an old woman, shaking with the palsy; "how I should like to see the head of this Hans of Iceland; then we should know if his eyes were really burning coals, as they say."

"To be sure they are!" rejoined another beldame; "did n't he set the cathedral of Drontheim on fire by merely looking at it? But I should like to see the monster whole, just as he is, with his serpent's tail, cloven foot, and great wings, like a bat."

"Who told you all that nonsense, mother?" asked the mountaineer, with a contemptuous air. "There's no truth in it; I've seen Hans myself, in the gorges of Medsypath, and he is a man just like ourselves, only about the height of a poplar tree of forty years' growth!"

"Really!" exclaimed a voice in the crowd;—it's tone was sarcastic, but there was something else in it, which greeted sorely upon Spiagudry's ear.

The speaker was a man of low stature, whose features were concealed under the slouched felt hat of a miner, and his person entirely enveloped in a dark mantle.

"Faith!" exclaimed a forgerman, who stood by with his hammer in his hand; "whether they offer one or ten thousand crowns for his head, and whether he is four or forty feet in height, its not me they will get to go after him."

"Nor me—nor me," shouted most of the bystanders.

"If there is any one who will feel disposed to go in pursuit of him," observed the man in the mantle, "he will find Hans of Iceland at the ruins of Arban, near Smiasen, to-morrow, and after that at the grotto of Walderhog."

"Are you certain of that, my fine fellow?"

This question was put at the same time by two of the group; the one was Ordoner, the other a small man, dressed in black, who had come out from the only inn in the village, at the first sound of the horn.

The man in the mantle regarded them both, for a moment, with fixed attention, and then replied:

"Yes!"

"How shall I be certain you are not deceiving me?" demanded Ordoner.

"I know as well where Hans of Iceland is, as I do where Benignus Spiagudry is; they are neither of them far off."

All the terrors of the poor keeper returned; he dared not look at the mysterious stranger, but wrapped his own cloak more closely about him, and, plucking Ordoner by the mantle, entreated him, for heaven's sake, to leave this accursed village, which he believed was nothing less than a suburb of hell itself. But Ordoner, who was as much surprised as himself, though not alarmed, was wholly absorbed in trying to obtain a view of the stranger's features.

This the latter would not permit; but turning upon his heel, was at once lost in the crowd.

"I've seen that Benignus Spiagudry at the spladgest, in Drontheim," observed the fisherman; "he is a tall fellow; they offer four crowns for his head."

The mountaineer laughed.

"Four crowns!" he repeated; "I would not take the trouble to hunt him for that; I can get more for a blue fox skin."

This comparison, which, at any other time, would have been very offensive to Spiagudry, was, just now, quite the reverse. He was upon the point of urging Ordoner again to push on, when the latter anticipated his request by extricating himself from the crowd, which had now begun to disperse.

Although they had proposed to pass the night at *Ælmæ*, our travellers, as if by mutual and tacit consent, quitted the village without delay, but from very different motives. Ordoner was influenced by the hope of more speedily coming upon the object of his pursuit; Spiagudry, by the fear of being detected and arrested by the archers.

At another time, Ordoner might have been amused by the timidity of his guide, but now he did not even observe it.

"Tell me, old man," he demanded, in an earnest tone, "what is the name of that ruin, and in what direction does it lie? the ruin where the stranger said Hans would be found to-morrow."

"I do not know, noble seignior," replied the keeper; "indeed, I did not understand what he said;" and this was literally true; for he had been too much terrified by what had been said before, to listen.

"I'm sorry for that," exclaimed Ordoner; "for now we shall be obliged to wait

till the day after, and meet him at Walderhog."

"At Walderhog, seignior!—that is the strong hold of the demon himself!"

"Well; let us take the road to it directly."

"We shall have to go round the cliff of *Ælmæ*; it is something less than two days' journey to Walderhog."

"Do you know," inquired Ordoner, "who that stranger was, who seemed so well acquainted with the movements of Hans of Iceland, and your own?"

"Indeed, I do not," faltered Benignus; "but there was something in his voice, which made me feel very disagreeably."

"Fear nothing," replied Ordoner, desirous of soothing his agitation. "Do you do your duty by me, and I'll protect you from all harm. Besides, I promise you that if I succeed in taking this man, or devil, you shall have the thousand crowns reward, which is offered for his head."

Honest Benignus was very fond of his life; but, if possible, he was still more fond of money. Ordoner's generous promise acted like magic; it not only banished all his fears, but excited in the timid breast of the old man, a sort of hilarity which could not be contained there, but burst forth into a train of odd disquisition, accompanied by grotesque gestures, and all manner of learned and classical quotations.

"Seignior Ordoner," he remarked, "if ever I have the opportunity of discussing the merits of this adventure with the learned philosopher, Olaus Bilsouth, sometimes called *the bavard*; I shall certainly maintain that you are a wise and honorable young man; for what can be more praiseworthy, nay, more glorious—in fact, what *æthara tuba, vel campana dignius*, than to strive, at the risk of your own life, to rid your country of a brigand, a demon, or rather a monster, who embodies in himself all the attributes of all the brigands, and all the demons? Let no one tell me that you are actuated by sordid motives. I shall reply, that the Seignior Ordoner abandoned the reward of his adventure to the humble companion of his toils, to a feeble old man, who guided him to within a mile of the grotto of Walderhog, (for I trust, noble master, you will not insist upon my going any farther, but will permit me to await the result of the combat in the hamlet of Sarb, which is about a mile from the Walderhog,) and when your renowned victory is known, seignior, every heart in Norway will leap with joy, like that which thrilled through the breast of *Vermond, the proscribed*, when from this

very rock of *Ælmæ*, he perceived the beacon which Halfdan, his brother, had lighted on the donjon of Monckholm, in token of his deliverance."

At the name of Monckholm, Ordoner interrupted him abruptly, to inquire if the donjon of Monckholm could be seen from the height of the rock, around which they were passing.

"Yes, seignior," replied the old man, "at a distance to the south, between the two mountains, which our ancestors used to call '*Les Escabelles de Frigga*.' Just now, I doubt not, you can see the light in the fanal of the donjon very distinctly."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Ordoner, who caught with avidity at the idea of seeing again, at ever so great a distance, the spot where he had left all that he held dear. "There is a path, of course, which conducts to the heights; is there not, old man?"

"Doubtless, seignior, there is a path: it strikes through those woods on the right, and ascends gently enough until you get to the rock, and from thence it is continued by steps, cut by the followers of *Vermond*, the proscribed, up to the summit, which he fortified with the castle, the ruins of which you see by the light of the moon."

"Well, show me the path, old man; we'll pass the night in those ruins, where the donjon of Monckholm can be seen."

"But, seignior," returned the old man, "the ascent is very difficult; and consider how far we have travelled to-day."

"No matter, you can lean on me. I never felt less fatigued in my life."

"Still, seignior, this old path is now so overgrown, and the steps in the rock are so unsafe, that in the night—"

"I'll take the lead myself, then, only you direct my path."

"Suppose some savage beast, or impure being, or frightful monster—"

"No fear of that—I did not undertake this journey to avoid monsters."

The idea of halting so near *Ælmæ* was very unpleasant to *Spigudry*, aside from the difficulties and dangers of the ascent. But the temptation of seeing Monckholm, was irresistible to Ordoner.

"My young master, I entreat you do not insist upon climbing the rock to-night," said *Spigudry*. "I have a presentiment that some evil will come of it."

But his entreaties were in vain.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the impatient Ordoner. "Recollect your business is to guide me, not to advise: show me the path without further delay."

"Oh, we shall reach it soon enough," replied Spiagudry, with an air of reluctant submission.

The path was indeed at hand, and Spiagudry remarked with surprise not unminged with apprehension, that the bushes and underwood which had overgrown it, were broken and trampled down, as if some one had recently passed over it.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NEWS OF THE REVOLT REACHES DRON- THEIM.

BEFORE a table covered with papers, some of which were newly opened letters, General Levin de Knud sat in a state of deep revery. Near to him stood a secretary, awaiting his orders. The general was now kicking holes in the rich carpet with the rowels of his spurs, and now twirling the decoration of the order of the Elephant which was suspended from his neck. Time and again he opened his mouth to speak, and then he would check himself, rub his forehead, and betake himself to the reëxamination of his papers. At last he broke forth with—

"How the devil!"—and then, after a moment's silence he continued—"could these infernal miners manage this affair so adroitly? There must have been some secret intrigue at the bottom of all this. Do you know, Whapperny, that this has got to be a very serious matter indeed? Five or six hundred rascals, from the isles of Farær, have taken arms under the command of an old bandit by the name of Jonas. A young fanatic, by the name of Norbith, has rallied as many more from the mines of Guldbranshall, and they are joined by the disaffected from Sund Mær, Hubfallo, and Kongsberg. And then the mountaineers of Keole, led on by Kennybol the keenest hunter of the north, make common cause with them. Do you know that the common report is, in the upper part of the province, that the famous brigand, Hans of Iceland, on whose head we have set a price, commands in chief and conducts the insurrection? What do you think of all this, Whapperny, ha?"

"Your excellency," replied Whapperny, "knows what measures——"

"But there is another circumstance, connected with this miserable business, that is inexplicable to me," continued the general. "It is pretended that one old prisoner, Schumacker, is the instigator of this revolt. Now that, I cannot believe; Ordoner loves him, and he could not be so much imposed

upon. Yet it is said the miners rally in his name, profess to rise in his behalf, and give him all the titles that the king deprived him of. That much seems certain. And then again, how comes it that this mischievous woman, the chancellor's wife, knows of all these things days ago, long before any intelligence is brought to me? But, no matter, prompt action is our only remedy now—give me my seal, Whapperny."

The general wrote three letters, sealed them, and handed them to the secretary.

"Here, let this be sent at once to Col. Voethurn, that he may march the regiment of arquebusiers of Monckholm, forthwith to the seat of revolt. This to the keeper of the fortress—he must guard his prisoner, Schumacker, more closely than ever. I must go over and have an interview with the old ex-chancellor myself. This to Major Wholm at Skongen; he must send a detachment to join the arquebusiers. Dispatch, Whapperny, let these orders be sent at once."

The secretary left the apartment, and the general relapsed into his revery.

"This is extremely annoying," said he to himself. "The revolt of these miners, the presence of this intriguing countess, and the absence of that madman, Ordoner, who has gone no one knows where, right into the midst of these miscreants as likely as not. And then, he has left under my protection this old prisoner, who conspires against the state, and his daughter, whose dangerous companion I have sent off—that Frederic d'Ahlefeldt, whom Ordoner accuses of——But then, he will stand a chance of coming in contact with the rebels too—Walstrom, where I sent him, is close by the ruins of Arbar, and the lake of Smiasen, one of which positions the insurgents will occupy of course."

Just then the door opened, and Gustavus made his appearance.

"Well, what do you want?" said the general.

"A courier craves audience of your excellency."

"What! another? What new disaster now? send him in."

The messenger entered, and delivered a packet to the general.

"From his highness the viceroy, your excellency."

The governor tore open the dispatch, and read it.

"By St. George!" he exclaimed, in a new paroxysm of astonishment; "I believe the whole world has gone mad. The viceroy requires my presence at Berghen, on

matters of high importance, by order of the king. A precious time, indeed, for me to be absent from my post. 'The chancellor will act as your substitute, until your return.' Just such a substitute as I don't like. 'The bishop will assist him;' really, Frederic has hit upon a capital pair of governors for a province in a state of revolt:—two gownsmen, a chancellor, and a bishop. Well, it can't be helped; the king's orders must be obeyed. I know that there is some intrigue at the bottom of all this, and that my ruin is plotted; but I have one consolation, happen what may, and that is a good conscience."

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER PARTY IN SEARCH OF HANS OF ICELAND.

"YES, noble count, it was this day that he was to be met with at the ruins of Arbar, and I have many reasons for supposing that my information, which I told you I obtained by chance, at Ælme, was correct."

"Are we far from these ruins?"

"They are near the lake of Smiasen: the guide tells me, we shall reach there before the middle of the day."

These words were passing between two horsemen, muffled in long brown cloaks, who early in the morning were following the winding path, which leads through the forest from the lake of Sparbo, to that of Smiasen. They were preceded by a rude mountaineer, as a guide, who was mounted on a small gray pony, with his axe in his hand, and his horn by his side. Behind them, followed four horsemen, armed to the teeth, toward whom the two first mentioned personages turned from time to time, to see that they kept out of earshot.

"If this brigand is really to be found at the ruins of Arbar, I shall think it a great point gained," remarked the lesser of the two cloaked cavaliers. The principal difficulty I have apprehended, hitherto, has been the finding him."

"You think then, Musdamon, that he will accede to our proposition?"

"Undoubtedly, your grace; what more can a brigand ask than gold and impunity?"

"Recollect, however, that this is said to be no common brigand. Take care you don't judge him too much by yourself. Suppose, however, that he should refuse; how will you fulfill your promise to the miners?"

"In that case, your grace," replied Musdamon—"in that case, which, by the way,

I do not think possibly can occur, recollect the gigantic mountaineer whom I have engaged to personate him, and who will then accompany me to the meeting of the miners."

"True, Musdamon; you are always prepared for every emergency, my good fellow," replied the count; and they for a time pursued their way in silence.

Musdamon, who was desirous of keeping the count in good-humor, for the purpose of amusing him, addressed a question to the guide:

"Can you tell me, my man, what is the history of that old stone cross, behind the clump of young oaks, yonder?" he asked.

The guide looked in the direction which was designated, and then turning his head toward the spokesman with a peculiar grin, replied:

"Oh yes, master; that cross is the first gallows that was ever set up in Norway. The holy king, Olaus, had it made to hang a judge upon, who was in league with a robber."

Musdamon perceived, at a glance, that so far as amusing his patron was concerned, his experiment was a failure.

"It is a very curious story," continued the guide; "I had it from old mother Osy. The robber was made to hang the judge." As he was proceeding to entertain his employer with the details, which were not—considering the nature of their present errand—particularly adapted to please, Musdamon checked him:

"Come, come; we have heard enough of that; we understand all these matters well enough, ourselves."

"Understand?" muttered the count between his teeth; "insolent scoundrel! you shall pay dearly for your impertinence one day."

"What did your grace observe?" inquired Musdamon, with an obsequious air.

"I was just pondering, my dear Musdamon, how I was to procure for you that order of Dannebrog; and it strikes me that it will be a good time to ask for it when my daughter is married."

Musdamon was profuse in his protestations and acknowledgments.

"But let us talk of *our* affairs," resumed the count. "Do you suppose the Mechlenborgher has received that letter of recall that he procured to be sent to him, yet?"

By 'the Mechlenborgher,' the count was accustomed to designate the old General de Knud.

"*Our* affairs?" muttered Musdamon to himself; "*my* affairs; they are not *our* affairs;" and then aloud, he replied, "Seign-

ior Count, according to my calculation, the viceroy's messenger must have reached Drontheim before this time, and the general has either started, or is about to do so."

"That recall," observed the count, in a flattering tone, "was one of your master strokes, Musdamon—one of the best manœuvres that even you ever hit upon."

"The credit of the scheme is due to your grace, rather than to me," replied Musdamon, ever anxious, as we have before observed, to commit the count in all his intrigues.

The count was well aware of this, but never appeared conscious of it. He answered with a smile:

"You are too modest, my dear secretary; but that shall not prevent you from receiving a suitable acknowledgment for your services. The presence of Elphaga in Drontheim, and the absence of the Mechleubergher, makes me sole master of the province. And now, if Hans of Iceland accepts my proposition, I shall have him in my power, and then I can make my appearance before the king, with the glory of having quelled this insurrection, and taken this redoubtable brigand."

They continued conversing in a low tone for some time, when the guide turned his head, and accosted them:

"Look there at your left, noble gentlemen," he exclaimed; "do you see that mound? That is where Biord, the just, had Vellon, the double-tongued, beheaded in the presence of the whole army. The traitor had sent away the king's friend, and introduced an enemy into the camp, that he might claim the merit of saving the king's life."

The souvenirs of olden times, in Norway, did not seem at all suited to the taste of our travellers, for Musdamon called out, hastily:

"Come, come, my good man, shut your mouth and push on! What do you suppose we care about these old mounds and gallowses, or the foolish people connected with them. You annoy my master with your old wife's tales."

His last assertion was unquestionably true.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VISIT OF ORDONER AND SPIAGUDRY TO THE RUINS OF ARBAR, AND THE AWFUL FATE OF THE LATTER.

LET us now return to Ordoner and Spiagudry, whom we left about to ascend the cliff of Ælma, by the light of the rising moon. This huge rock, naked from the commencement of its curve, is called, by

the peasantry of the neighborhood, the vulture's crest; a name which, from the peculiarity of its shape, seems appropriate enough. As the travellers approached the rock the trees dwindled into bushes, these into shrubs, and, finally, these were succeeded by vines, moss, and the scanty vegetation which always encircles the summit of a lofty mountain. The old man, as usual, beguiled the way with his dissertations upon all sort of subjects—moral, physical, and scientific.

"Seignior Ordoner," he observed, "this ascent is very fatiguing; and really, it requires all my devotion to—— But there is something, on the right, which looks to me like a magnificent convolvulus; I should very much like to examine it by daylight. Don't you think it is a great piece of impertinence, to value a savant like me at only four crowns? 'Tis true, Phedrus was a slave; and, if we are to believe the learned Doctor Planude, Esop was sold like a beast of burthen in the cattle-market. To be sure, one may be proud to be classed with the great Esop——"

"Or with the celebrated Hans," suggested Ordoner with a smile.

"By St. Hospice! don't mention that name here. I could easily dispense with the honor. But would it not be a singular thing, if the price of his head should fall to the lot of his companion in outlawry, Benignus Spiagudry? Really, Seignior Ordoner, I think you are a far more magnanimous adventurer than Jason was, for he did not give the golden fleece to his pilot; and I am certain your undertaking is vastly more perilous than was his."

"Well," said Ordoner, "since you know Hans of Iceland so well, give me some description of him. You have already told me that he is not a giant, as is commonly reported."

"Hush! seignior," whispered the old man, "don't you hear a noise like footsteps behind us?"

"Yes," replied Ordoner, quietly; "it is some wild animal, I suppose, whose repose we have disturbed, and who is seeking shelter among the undergrowth."

"You are right, doubtless, my young Cæsar," replied the keeper; 'tis a long time since these fastnesses have been disturbed by human feet; from the weight of the step, however, I should judge that this must be some large animal. It may be the elan, or reindeer; they are abundant in this part of Norway. There are catamounts too; I saw one of monstrous size, which was brought to Copenhagen. I must

give you a description of this ferocious animal."

"I wish, my dear guide, you would give me a description of that still more ferocious animal, Hans——"

"Do n't speak so loud, seignior; how can you pronounce that name with so much indifference? Who knows—but God help us! Listen!"

Spigudry drew as near as possible to Ordoner, who paused for a moment, and they both heard a low sort of growl, like that which had frightened the old keeper at the dead-house, on the night of their first meeting.

"Do you hear, seignior?" he exclaimed again, trembling with fear.

"I do," said Ordoner; "but I see no reason for your alarming yourself. It is the growling of some wild beast—one of those catamounts, very probably, of which you were speaking just now. Did you expect to traverse the woods at this hour, without raising some of their inhabitants? But keep a good heart; they are far more afraid of you, than you of them."

The cool and undisturbed bearing of his companion, somewhat reassured the old man; but he continued:

"It all may be as you say, seignior; still there was something in the growling of that beast, which sounded to me horribly like a voice I have sometimes heard. It was an unlucky fancy of yours to climb this hill to-night, seignior. Depend upon it, something evil will befall us yet."

"Give yourself no uneasiness; I am with you," replied Ordoner.

"Oh, I know you fear nothing, seignior; whether you have not cause to fear, is another thing. The blessed Saint Paul was the only one we hear of, that could handle vipers with impunity. But tell me, have you not remarked since we have been in this path, that there are strong appearances of its having been travelled lately?"

"Yes, but what of that? I know not why I should trouble myself because the weeds have been trampled upon, or the boughs broken. Come; we are nearly through the brush, and then we shall hear no more from the wild beast. So, rally all your powers, for this path cut in the rock, will doubtless be more difficult than the one we are now upon."

"Not on account of its steepness, seignior," replied the old man; "but it is interrupted in places, as the philosopher Sackson says, by fallen rocks, which are too large to move, and not easy to clamber over, or around. Among others, there is, at the postern of Malaer, which we shall

soon reach, an enormous triangular block of granite, which I have a great desire to examine. Shœming says he discovered three original Runic characters upon it."

The travellers had made some progress in their ascent of the path over the rock, when they came in sight of the ruins of a small tower or gate-house, through which it was necessary to pass, and to which Spigudry directed Ordoner's attention.

"That," said he "is the postern of Malaer, seignior, and many similar structures are to be found upon this rock, which illustrate the ancient science of fortification in Norway. This is the first outwork of the strong hold of Vermond, the proscribed, and here were posted a piquet of four men-at-arms. This tower, *postern*, or *post*, puts me in mind of a singular remark made by the monk Urensus, in regard to the corresponding Latin term, *janua*, or gate. That, he says, is derived from the proper name Janus, the name of the god, the gates of whose temple are so celebrated in Roman history; and from the same root he derives the name *janissary*, which is applied to those Turkish soldiers who guard the sultan's gate, or port. It would be odd, would it not, if the name of the ancient god of peace should have originated the appellation of the most ferocious soldiery of modern day?"

With such philosophical vagaries, Spigudry beguiled his weary way over the rocks, while the prospect of seeing the lights of Monckholm once more, rendered Ordoner insensible to fatigue. They soon arrived at the postern, and the old savant exclaimed with joy:

"I see it, seignior! there it is! This more than repays me for all my trouble."

"See what?" cried Ordoner, whose thoughts were fixed upon Ethel, and Monckholm.

"Why, the triangular block or pyramid, which Shœming speaks of. I shall be the third person of learning, after Shœming and the bishop, who has ever seen it. Oh, why is it not daylight?"

This famous monument reached, the keeper uttered a new cry of astonishment, which drew from Ordoner another inquiry as to the cause of his emotion; but the learned archæologist was for a period unable to reply.

"What is the matter now?" repeated Ordoner. "You see this mass of granite does not block our path, as you apprehended, and for that, we have every reason to be thankful."

"That is just what troubles me," re-

plied the other with every symptom of vexation.

"How!" exclaimed Ordoner.

"How! seignior!" repeated his guide; why, do you not observe that this pyramidal block has been removed from its position, and that the base, which was formerly on the path, is now exposed, and that the face upon which Shœming discovered those ancient characters, is undermost? Oh, I am most unlucky!"

"A great matter to grumble about, indeed," replied Ordoner.

"But what is more," resumed Spiagudry, who seemed struck with a new and alarming view of the case; "the overturning of this immense mass, betokens the vicinity of some being of superhuman strength;—unless it was done by the fiend incarnate, there is but one, in Norway, who could do it."

"My poor old friend," said Ordoner, "how you are conjuring up new terrors for your own annoyance. How do you know, but this block of granite has lain in this position for years?"

"True," returned the other, "that may be; for it is more than one hundred and fifty years, since we have any account of its having been visited;—but stay, look here seignior, here is the place where it stood, and it is still damp—it must have been lately removed!"

Ordoner was too impatient to reach the summit to submit to further delay; he drew his companion forcibly along, and strove, as best he could, to soothe his fears, and allay his curiosity.

"Listen," said he, after going over all his arguments; "wait till I take this monster, Hans, and you get the thousand crowns, and then you can establish yourself on this mountain and devote your days to natural science and antiquities."

"All that sounds very well, my noble master," replied the old man; "but do not be too confident of victory, in a contest so doubtful as that you have undertaken. Now, I have one important piece of advice to give you, which may be of assistance to you in your encounter with this monster."

"Advice!" exclaimed Ordoner eagerly; "what is it?"

"This brigand," resumed the other, in a low tone, and with an anxious look on every side; "wears, attached to his girdle a skull, out of which he drinks. The skull is that of the young man, for the outrage upon whose body I am accused of sacrilege."

"Raise your voice, and fear nothing; I can scarcely hear you. Well, this skull?"

"This skull," continued the old man, "you must obtain possession of. The monster attaches strange importance, and a deep superstitious value to that skull: obtain it and you have power over him."

"Very good, if true," replied Ordoner; "but how am I to get possession of this skull?"

"By artifice, seignior, perhaps when he is asleep——"

"Enough!" interrupted Ordoner, "your advice will do me no good; I never war with a sleeping enemy, and my weapon is the sword, not artifice."

"Why, seignior, did not even the archangel, Michael, condescend to use artifice, when he warred against the devil?"

Here Spiagudry stopped suddenly, and lifting up his hands, cried out in terror:

"Oh, merciful Heavens! what is that, master! Master! did you not see a man of low stature, in the path before us?"

"Faith, not I!" replied Ordoner, raising his eyes and looking in the direction designated.

"You did not? Ah, the path makes an angle there, and he has gone round the rock. Now, seignior, let us go no farther—no farther, I conjure you!"

"Why, really, my good old friend," replied Ordoner, quietly pursuing his way, "I see no occasion for stopping. If, as you say, there is any one ahead, it is clear he has no mind to wait for us, and because he runs one way, is there any reason we should run the other?"

"St. Hospice! pity and protect me!" ejaculated the old man, who, on all occasions appealed to that favorite patron.

"You took some shadow for a man," observed Ordoner.

"I certainly thought I saw a low man walking," replied Spiagudry, somewhat reassured; "but the moon does sometimes create strange illusions. For instance, there was Baldan, lord of Monaugh, who took a white curtain—though the moon shone—for the spirit of his mother; and went at once before the magistrate, and confessed his parricide, just before they were about to hang an innocent page for the murder. The moon-light may be said to have saved that page's life."

Spiagudry had one, to him, very important faculty—that of forgetting the present in the past; thus, when he called upon his memory for the legend of Baldan and related it, his own terrors vanished, and when he had concluded it, with the reflection mentioned above, he added:

"And it may be possible that I was deceived by the moon too."

Without further alarm, our travellers at length reached the summit of the vulture's crest, and saw before them the ruined hold of Vermond, the proscribed, which had previously been hidden from their view by the steepness of the rock.

It is by no means an unusual thing, in Norway, to see the hill-tops crowded with ancient towers, and indeed, throughout the mountainous parts of Europe, the traveller will everywhere find upon the highest cliffs, the remains of the fortresses and castles of olden times, as solitary, and almost as inaccessible as the deserted nests of the eagle and the vulture. The variety of these aerial structures, in Norway, at the period of which we are speaking, was as surprising as their numbers. Sometimes they consisted of an extensive range of walls, which inclosed the whole upper part of the mountain; and then again, of a cluster of slender turrets, upon the highest peak. Here would be a donjon, surrounded by a group of towers; and there, a gothic edifice, with its sharp and lofty arches. Farther on, might be seen the low and massive columns and heavy cornices of the Saxon architecture—the square and massive fortress of the Pagan chieftain—the round and loopholed castle of the Christian lord—the strong hold of the baron, shattered by the shock of war—the monastery of some religious order, crumbled by the hand of time; and these, upon their lonely and almost inaccessible heights, seemed as if left for no other purpose than to bear witness to after ages, at once, of the weakness and the strength of man. Deeds of note had been done, and works of varied good and ill, been wrought within those ancient and time-worn walls; but the hands that had performed them had mouldered away; the eyes that saw them, were closed in death, and even the traditions which perpetuated them, had perished, like a fire which had burned out, and left nought but ashes as a token of its having once existed.

The domain of Vermond, the proscribed, upon which our travellers had entered, was one of those from which superstition had drawn many legends of the marvellous and supernatural. By the peculiar structure of its walls, which were laid with a cement stronger than the stone itself, it was easy to discover that the era of its construction was as far back as the fifth or sixth centuries. Of its five towers, but one remained entire, the rest having all been more or less dilapidated by the hand of time, the ravages of war, or the beating of the elements. These towers were connected by

an exterior range of walls, which was also, for the most part, in ruins, but which still marked out the limits of the original edifice. Into this inclosure, shattered and crumbling as its defences were, and overgrown with the tangled vine of the ivy, and other parasitical plants, it was no easy matter to penetrate; and upon the long and flexible tendrils of these vines, which on one side overhung the edge of the cliff and swept down for some distance over its surface, it was said that the disembodied spirits of those who drowned themselves in the lake of Sparbo, swung back and forth by moonlight, above the depths where their mortal remains lay sleeping. These visions of mystery and terror, it is said, were often seen by the fishermen, who, taking advantage of the sea-dog's slumber, waited to moor their barks beneath the cliff, which, at a dizzy height above, impended over their heads: jutting out like the broken arch of some gigantic bridge.

With some difficulty, our travellers penetrated the inclosure, and made the best of their way toward the only remaining tower, which was situated upon the extreme verge of the precipice. Before they reached it, it became entirely dark, the moon having been obscured by a black cloud, which had long been lowering above it. They could no longer see the entrance, and were assiduously feeling for it with their hands, when Benignus suddenly stopped short, and grasped his companion's arm with a convulsive clutch, to which succeeded a fit of trembling, so violent, as almost to shake the stalwart form of Ordoner himself.

"Well! what now?" exclaimed the young man in surprise.

Benignus made no reply, but by a still stronger pressure, as if to entreat his silence.

"But," continued Ordoner, when another clutch, accompanied by a noise, which was something between an ineffectual attempt to speak, and a gasp for breath, convinced him that his companion could not answer.

After waiting some time for this fit of terror to pass off, the young man at last had the satisfaction of hearing the voice of his guide, though so low and faint, as scarcely to be understood:

"Now, master, what do you say?" faltered Spiagudry.

"Say to what?" replied Ordoner.

"Do you not regret having come here?"

"Regret it? no! why should I? what is the matter?"

"What! seignior! did you not see?"

"See what?"

"And you saw nothing?"

"No, nothing," replied Ordener, who began to lose his patience; "I saw nothing, and I heard nothing, except the chattering of your teeth."

"What! not behind this wall? There were two eyes of fire, like comets, glaring upon us, and you did not see them?"

"No, upon my honor."

"And you did not see them move and wander about, up and down the court, and finally disappear in among the ruins?"

"No, I saw nothing of the kind. But suppose I had, what then?"

"What then, seignior! and is it possible you have never heard that there is but one man, in Norway, whose eyes are thus luminous in the dark?"

"No: but suppose it to be so, what is that to us? Who is your man with cat's eyes? Hans of Iceland? If it is, so much the better; it will save us the journey to Walderhog."

"Oh, seignior! you promised to leave me at the village of Sarb, a mile from the place of combat," exclaimed Spiagudry, in the very extremity of terror.

The noble and generous spirit of Ordener was moved at the abject state to which fear had reduced his poor old companion. He endeavored once more to cheer and encourage him.

"You are right," he replied, "my old friend. It would be unjust to expose you to danger, nor will I do so. Fear nothing. You see Hans everywhere. It was doubtless the eyes of some wild animal which you saw, and not those of this man, even if they do shine in such a manner, which I do not believe."

Once more Spiagudry allowed himself to be pacified, whether by the argument of his companion, or by the example of perfect tranquillity that he set him, it would be difficult to say. But he finally replied, "Ah, seignior, I should have died with fright ten times in climbing this accursed hill, had it not been for you. Though, to be sure, had it not been for you I should not have thought of the undertaking."

The moon now reappeared, and discovered to them the entrance to the tower which they had already reached. Lifting up a huge curtain of ivy, which in return rained down upon their heads a shower of sleeping lizards, old birds' nests and dried leaves, they penetrated the interior, where Spiagudry soon struck a light, and with rubbish which was scattered about in abundance, kindled a fire. The flame burned cheerily up, and enabled them to take a

view of their accommodations for the night. The tower was a huge circular building, of which nothing remained but the exterior walls and the roof. It had been divided into four stories, but the beams by which these were supported had long mouldered away and the ceiling had fallen. A narrow staircase, built partly in the wall, ascended to the top of the building; but it was greatly dilapidated, and in some places seemed incapable of sustaining the lightest footstep. At the first appearance of the fire, a cloud of owls and bats filled the space above their heads, flapping their dusky wings, and making the whole interior resound with their ill-omened screeching and funereal cries.

"Our hosts seem inclined to give us a merry reception, my old friend," observed Ordener. "You are not alarmed at their hilarity, I hope."

"No, seignior," returned Spiagudry, "I'm not afraid of owls and bats. I've lived too long with the dead to be frightened by vampires. 'T is the living whom I dread. I'm not brave, I confess; but I'm not superstitious. But come; while our friends on the wing keep up the dance, let us think of supper."

Ordener was thinking only of Monckholm.

"My provisions are not very tempting," continued Spiagudry, "but if your appetite is as good as mine, this brown bread, and rancid cheese, will not go a begging. I fear we shall not be able to comply with the regulation of Philip le Bel, to-night—'*nemo audeat comedere præter duofercula cum potagio*.' There ought to be pheasants' nests on the top of this tower, but how is one to get at them when the staircase will not bear the weight of a sylph?"

"It will have to bear my weight," replied Ordener, "for I shall most certainly ascend to the roof."

"What! for birds' nests, seignior? Do not be guilty of such imprudence. Our supper is not a very good one, it is true, but do n't risk your neck to improve it; besides, how are you to tell an owl's nest from a pheasant's, when you find them?"

"I'm not thinking about birds' nests at all. Did you not tell me that the donjon of Monckholm might be seen from the top of this tower?"

"Yes, seignior, certainly, to the south; and it is an important geographical fact, which has been long upon record, and which it would be well to verify again. But, though one should be willing to undergo great fatigue, in the demonstration of a scientific point, he is not expected to

expose his life. I see now the laudable purpose for which you insisted upon visiting these scenes; but you have done all that can be done. Let me entreat you not to venture upon this tottering staircase, upon some portions of which a crow could not balance itself."

Benignus had no desire to be left alone in these ruins, and as he became more anxious to retain his companion with him, he rose for the purpose of strengthening his entreaties by taking him by the hand; in so doing, his haversack, which was lying upon his knees, fell upon the ground, and sent forth a ringing, metallic sound, which attracted the attention of Ordener.

"Pray tell me," exclaimed the latter, "what is it that causes that sound, which I have so often heard proceed from your haversack?"

This was touching upon a very delicate point; and so disagreeable was the subject to Spiagudry, that he at once lost all desire to restrain his protector from the perilous ascent he meditated; so, without returning any answer to the question which had been put to him, he addressed Ordener in a very different strain from that which he had intended to use when he rose from the ground.

"If you will go," he said, "in spite of all I can say to prevent you, pray take care of the gaps in the staircase."

"But you have not told me what is in your haversack," repeated Ordener.

This perseverance was still more annoying to Spiagudry, and he cursed the question in his heart.

"Why should you trouble yourself about the jingling of a bit of iron against a stone, my noble master?" he observed; "but, really, if I cannot prevail upon you to refrain, you had better ascend soon, and take care to keep hold of the stones that are built into the wall. You can see the fanal of Mönckholm quite plain, directly between Les Escabelles de Frigga."

Spiagudry could not possibly have hit upon any other suggestion so well calculated to dispel every spark of curiosity from his companion's mind, as that contained in his closing remark. Ordener, without another word, threw off his mantle, and sprang lightly up the stairway. Spiagudry followed him with his eye; and, notwithstanding the large size and powerful proportions of the young man, such was his agility, and so great the strength of his arm and hand, that he made his way up and over the frail and trembling steps with the rapidity of thought, and soon was seen,

like a shadow, skirting the obscure heights of the building.

When he had disappeared, the old man seated himself by the fire, and picking up his haversack, commenced a soliloquy much to the following effect:

"Now, my dear Benignus Spiagudry, while the eyes of this young lynx are off from you a while, let us break open this infernal steel casket which hinders us from taking possession, *oculis et manu*, of the treasure which it undoubtedly contains; the which, when it is delivered from its confinement, will be much easier to carry, and easier to conceal."

So saying, he took up a stone to break open the casket, when a ray of light from the fire glaucing upon it, exhibited to the learned antiquarian the gorgeous armorial bearings of a count deeply inwrought upon the steel plate which secured it.

"Now, by Saint Hospice! unless I am greatly deceived," he exclaimed, as he rubbed the surface of the plate with his sleeve, "these must be the arms of Griffenfeldt! What a great fool I should have been, to have defaced them. Doubtless, this is the only perfect model of those famous heraldic insignia remaining; for all that could be found were broken by the king's command, and by the hand of the executioner. Whatever be the treasure this casket contains, unless, indeed, it should be the coin of Palmyra, or the medals of Carthage, it cannot be more precious than this. I, then, am the sole possessor of the proscribed arms of Griffenfeldt, and it behooves me to take care of them. I can easily remove the hinges of this casket by means of some solvent, and Heaven forbid that I should be guilty of destroying the last impression of these famous arms. Yes; there they are—the hand of justice, and the scales on a red ground. What a piece of good fortune! Yes, and within are the treasures of the ex-chancellor. Oh! my fortune's made! Suppose any one, tempted by the four royal crowns, which the syndics have offered for my head, should arrest me?—let them do it; gold is all powerful; I can outbid the syndics now. Yes; this casket—blessed be the day it came into my hands—will save me from all harm."

At the close of this soliloquy, the happy old man raised his eyes in transport. But alas! that very motion put a period to his exultation, and converted the joyful anticipations which had just filled his breast, into the very extreme of terror and dismay. What his consternation was, may be better imagined than described, when

he saw standing directly before him, on the other side of the fire, a man of low stature, wrapped in a long and blood-stained mantle, whom, by his eyes of flame, his malignant and cruel aspect, and his massive axe, he at once recognized as the object of his mortal dread, his visitor at the spladgest of Drontheim.

"It is I!" exclaimed this terrible being; "but fear not, Spiagudry," he continued, with an ironic smile; "your casket will save you. Is this the road to Theoctree?"

The wretched keeper strove to reply, but could only stammer out—"Theoctree! Seignior—my lord and master—I was going—"

"You were going to Walderhog!" interrupted the other, in a voice of thunder.

Spiagudry with all his efforts could barely muster force to make a sign in the negative.

"You were guiding an enemy to my retreat! 'tis well, for there would have been one less of the accursed race of man living. You will guide him no more; but fear not—when you go, he will speedily follow."

Spiagudry would have cried out, but so paralyzed was he by terror, that he was only able to give utterance to a faint and indistinct murmur.

"No noise!" growled the other, waving his axe above his head—"or you die upon the spot. What fear you? Were you not but to-day in search of me? But you have betrayed me!" he hissed between his teeth, with the utmost concentration of rage.

"No, no! your grace—your excellency," faltered Spiagudry, hardly able to articulate even these few words.

"Think not to deceive me!" continued the other, in tones which penetrated to the innermost soul of his victim. "Listen! I was upon the roof of the spladgest, when you made your compact with that fool, whom you accompanied hither. Twice you heard my voice; again you heard it upon the heath above the howling of the blast; I was with you in the tower of Vyglæ—I bade you *au revoir*."

The keeper cast a despairing glance around, as if for succor, but none was at hand, and the demon continued:

"I left you, to destroy the soldiers, for they were of the regiment of Monckholm, but I never lost sight of you. I was at Celmæ, under the disguise of a miner. It was my footsteps and voice which you heard; my form that you distinguished in the distance on your path hither; and it

was my eyes you saw gliding among these ruins."

The miserable man, to whom every word of this discourse was a sentence of death, grovelled at his feet in agony, and embracing his knees, ejaculated:

"Mercy! mercy! spare me! pardon!"

The monster, whose eyes outshone in brilliancy the flames which ascended from the fire before him, repulsed the miserable suppliant, and in tones of fiendish mockery replied:

"Ask mercy from your casket, that will save you."

"Oh! spare me, mighty master!" repeated the half-dying victim.

"I bade you be faithful and mute," replied the other; "the first you have not been, but I'll take good care that you shall at least be mute hereafter."

Spiagudry, who understood the fearful meaning of his reply, could only utter a deep-drawn groan.

"Oh, fear nothing!" exclaimed his tormentor, "I am not going to take your precious casket from you;" so saying, with a leathern belt which he passed through a ring of the box of steel, he secured it to the person of Spiagudry, who lay shuddering at his feet; this done, he again addressed his victim: "Come, call upon whichever of the devils you intend to intrust with your soul, and that quickly, lest it fall into the hands of one you do not like so well."

Spiagudry was past the power of speech, and almost of motion, but his countenance expressed the most abject entreaty mingled with horror indescribable.

"Oh, my faithful Spiagudry!" continued the other, "I see you are sorry to part with your young companion; but fear not, come with me, you shall show him the way and he will soon follow you."

With these words, he bared his bloody hands with claws of iron, and seizing the wretched Spiagudry, as a tiger does a bullock, flung him across his shoulder, and sprung out into the darkness. A moment after, one long and piercing yell, accompanied by a peal of fiendish laughter, rung through the ruined courts of the castle, and all was silent.

CHAPTER XXII.

ORDONER UPON THE TOWER.

MEANWHILE Ordoner, after a hundred hairbreadth escapes, had reached the roof of the tower. His unexpected visit roused from their slumbers a whole host of owls,

and bats, and birds of the night, who flapped their dusky wings, glanced upon him with their brilliant eyes, and sailed away in the darkness, alarmed by the din of the rocks which, displaced by his hands and feet, fell from the ruined battlements, and plunged thundering into the abyss below.

To any one but Ordoner, the scene which now presented itself, would have been full of awful and sombre attraction. The indistinct light of the moon, which was wading heavily through the cloudy sky, but half revealed the features of the immense landscape which was spread out beneath him. Here mountains towered like giants, their hoary tops scarce distinguishable from the clouds amid which they had hid themselves; there reposed the lakes, beneath a shroud of mist, which, filling the valleys in which they lay, gave them the appearance of inland seas, and to the adjoining hills the guise of islands. Upon the ear came, like a distant murmur, the voice of the forest and the waterfall, which, mingled with the nearer sighing of the wind through the loop-holes and crevices of the ivy-clad ruins about him, formed one grand melody, raised by material nature, pending the slumber of man and the stillness of night.

Impressive, however, as was the scene and accompaniment, it was lost upon Ordoner. Scarcely had his foot found a secure resting-place on the dilapidated terrace, before his eye swept the southern horizon with an eagle's glance, until, with joy unspeakable, it met the rays of a brilliant light, gleaming from the bosom of the deep. It was the fanal of Monckholm.

None but these who have tasted the truest and purest source of enjoyment which life affords, can appreciate the feelings of our hero at this moment. Fixed and immovable, lost to all around, he remained gazing upon this star of his hope, and drinking deep draughts of comfort and consolation from its beams; every ray which shot from it, seemed to bring him something of Ethel. Indeed, it were almost a sin to doubt, that by such means, there often does exist some mysterious communication between the souls of those who love. To separate them, in vain the world of reality rears its barriers: dwellers in the ideal, they are present, even when absent, and death itself does but unite them; for true love may suffer, but cannot die.

Who is there that has not lingered, some dark and rainy night, to watch the glimmering of a light through some well-known casement? Who has not, regardless of the howling of the storm, wandered, in

ecstasy, about the mansion where slept the loved one of his heart? Who has not pursued, with lightning speed, the fluttering of some far-off robe or floating veil, in which the keen eye of passion has detected some fancied resemblance? He who has not, has never loved, and cannot appreciate the emotion which filled the young man's breast.

To the transport which the first sight of the far-off fanal of Monckholm excited in Ordoner's bosom, succeeded a train of revery, a fit of half-sad and yet half-cheerful musing. With what a deal of painful effort, does one discover a bright point in the dark night of existence? was his first thought, as he reflected upon the toils of the evening, and the reward which was before him. Then returning again to Ethel: "She is there," he soliloquized; "she sleeps and dreams—perchance of me; but little does she imagine where I am—little does she think that her Ordoner is here, upon this giddy height, tottering over a fathomless abyss, with no other comfort than a single lock of her jet-black hair, and no other star of hope but yon red light, far in the horizon." Perceiving just then, that the illumination from the fire which Spiagudry had built below, was strong, and threw its glare upon the neighboring hill-tops, his revery took a new direction. "Perhaps," he thought, "she wakes, and from the window of her prison, casts an indifferent glance upon this very fire—perhaps—"

At this moment, a piercing cry, accompanied by a peal of fiendish laughter, ascended, as if from the very brink of the abyss below him. He turned at once, and saw the interior of the tower vacant; anxious for the safety of his old companion, he descended hastily; but had scarcely accomplished a fourth of the perilous descent, before a dull and heavy sound, as if some weighty body had fallen into the deep waters of the lake, struck upon his ear.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FORTRESS OF MONCKHOLM.

THE sun was setting, and its horizontal rays threw upon the coarse simarre of old Schumacker, and the simple crape dress of Ethel, the shadow of the gratings which secured the window of their prison. The count was seated upon his fauteuil, in his usual position, with his head reclining upon his hand, while Ethel had placed herself upon a tabouret at his feet.

"Father, dear father," said the daugh-

ter, who was ever seeking to alleviate his melancholy, by any means which chance threw into her way, "I had such pleasant dreams last night. I dreamed of a happy future—and yonder glorious sunset seems almost the embodiment of my dream: look at it, father—look at the evening sky."

I cannot see the sky, my Ethel, except through the bars of my prison; nor can I look upon your future, save through the impediments which my own misfortunes throw in the way of its prosperity." Then, dropping his head, which he had for a moment raised, once more upon his hands, he relapsed into his former state of melancholy and abstraction.

"Tis of the Seignior Ordoner you are thinking with so much anxiety; is it not, my father?" asked Ethel, timidly.

"Ordoner?" said the old man, as if seeking to recall to mind something he had lost. "Ah, yes! I understand now. Well, what of him?"

"Do you think he will return soon, father? It seems a long time since he has gone; this is the fourth day——"

"I think," interrupted the old man, "that when he has been gone four years, there will be more chance of his returning soon than there is now!"

"Heavens! father!" exclaimed Ethel, turning pale; "do you not expect that he will return?"

This question was repeated twice, before the wretched misanthrope returned any answer; at last he said, peevishly:

"Did he not promise to return?"

"Certainly, my lord," replied Ethel, eagerly.

"Well, then, how can you expect him? Is he not a man? and do men ever observe a promise? If he was a vulture, he might return to a carcass he had left; but I have no faith in the return of the spring to a year which has already seen its autumn."

Ethel, timid and affectionate as she was, was aroused to respectful remonstrance by the injustice of her father.

"Father, she answered firmly, the Seignior Ordoner will return; he is not like other men."

"What do you know of him, girl?"

"No more than you know yourself, my noble father."

"I know nothing. I have heard men talk as bravely before; and then," he added, with a bitter smile, "I have had an opportunity to see how good it was to believe in their professions."

"I believe, father, precisely because it is good to believe."

"If you were now, as you should have

been, countess of Kongsberg, and princess of Wollin, with a host of gay and lordly flatterers about you, sighing for the hand of the heiress of the minister's wealth and honors, your credulity would be a great misfortune."

"It is not credulity, my father, but confidence in a friend."

"Ah, Ethel, it is easy to see," returned the old man, "that the blood of the sunny south flows in your veins." This idea led him into a new train of thought; and he continued, with more complacency: "Yes, my child, though they have succeeded in degrading your father below the humble estate from which he raised himself, they cannot deny that your mother was Charlotte, princess of Tarentum, nor that your ancestors were counts of Flanders."

But Ethel's thoughts accompanied him not.

"Father, she exclaimed, you wrong the noble Ordoner."

"Noble! my daughter; in what sense do you apply that word to him? I have made men noble who proved the vilest of the vile."

"I did not mean, my father, that he had been ennobled by the hand of man."

What then; have you found that he is descended from some *Jarl* or *Hessa* of ancient days?"

"I know nothing of his descent, father," replied Ethel; "he may be the son of a serf or a vassal. Do we not adorn our very footstools with the lyre and the crown? I mean that he is noble of heart."

"Noble of heart!" repeated the old man; "that is a nobility which even kings cannot bestow;—it is the gift of God alone, and when he does give it," he added, glancing at the broken insignia of his former greatness, "he never takes it back."

"Let that thought, my father, console you for what you have; lost" exclaimed Ethel, with filial enthusiasm.

"It might, my daughter," he replied; "but, know you not that the condemnation of the world is sometimes sanctioned by the approval of our consciences; such is our miserable nature, that self-reproach is never wanting to sharpen the pangs of misfortune."

"Say not so, my father," replied Ethel, who hastened to withdraw him from this melancholy train of reflection. "Indeed, now you are unjust toward *two* persons, who deserve to be better thought of—*yourself* as well as Ordoner."

"You speak inconsiderately, my girl, in relation to matters of such grave import as the life and character of man."

"Am I wrong then, my father, in defending the noble Ordoner?"

"I cannot, my daughter," returned the old man, "think you discreet in expressing so ardent an admiration for one of whom you know positively nothing, and whom you will probably never see again."

"Oh! do not say that," exclaimed Ethel, upon whom this sentence, pronounced by cold distrust, fell with stunning weight. "do not say so; we shall see him again. Is it not on your account that he has departed? Is it not for your sake that he faces this danger?"

"I was at the time," replied Schumacker, "as much taken with his promises as you are; but I have reflected, and my confidence is gone. No, depend upon it, he never went upon the errand he proposed; and if he did, he will never return to us."

"He has gone, I feel that he is gone!" reiterated Ethel, almost with violence, for every feeling of her heart was outraged by this undeserved reproach against her lover.

"Well, suppose he has gone," replied the old man coolly. "If he has gone to attack this brigand, it will still be as I said. He must fall—we shall never see him again."

Poor Ethel was entirely overcome by the cold and unfeeling nature of this last remark; she strove for a moment to conceal her emotion from her father, but in vain; the tears forced their way in torrents from her eyes, and she threw herself at his feet, sobbing aloud.

"Father! father!" she exclaimed, "do not speak thus of one, who perhaps at this very moment is shedding his blood for you."

The disgraced minister shook his head doubtfully. "That I neither wish nor believe," he replied, "and if I do him wrong, it is no more than those whom I have loved have done to me."

A deep-drawn sigh was Ethel's only answer, and Schumacker, turning to his table, occupied himself by tearing to pieces some leaves of a dilapidated copy of Plutarch's lives, which he felt at times in the humor of perusing, and at others in the mood for destroying.

A few moments after this conversation, a knock was heard at the door of the apartment; the prisoner, as was his custom, cried out, "No admission: I wish to see no one." But his prohibition was disregarded, and the door was thrown open, while an attendant announced:

"His excellency the governor."

An elderly man of commanding appear-

ance, dressed in the uniform of a general of the army, and decorated with the orders of the elephant and the golden fleece, entered the room and advanced toward Schumacker, who still kept his face covered with his hands, and muttered between his teeth, "The governor! the governor!" The new-comer saluted Ethel, who, with an anxious and unquiet air, kept near her father, and then addressed himself to the object of his visit:

"We have before mentioned the intention of General Levin de Knud to visit his prisoner, and sufficiently explained the motives which led him to this determination. It remains only to be added, that before carrying his purpose into effect, the general had fortified himself with all the severity his nature was capable of; with a view to conduct a cross-examination, which should be so strict and thorough, as to enable him to form a decisive opinion of the guilt or innocence of Schumacker in relation to the charge of conspiracy, upon which to found a report to the king and the viceroy, on this (to Schumacker) momentous question. No sooner, however, had he entered the apartment, than the wretched aspect of the poor ex-chancellor, and the sweet, though dignified demeanor, of his daughter, disarmed the kind and noble-hearted soldier, of all the austerity which he had summoned to his aid.

He advanced toward the fallen minister and, respectfully extending his hand, began—

"I have the honor to salute you, Count Griffen—Seignior Schumacker, I should say;" and then, somewhat confused, waited for a reply.

"Well, you are the governor of Drontheim, I suppose," said Schumacker, after a pause.

The governor, somewhat surprised at finding that he was to be the examined, instead of the examiner, bowed his head.

"In that case," continued the prisoner, "I have a complaint to prefer to you."

"Ah!" exclaimed the noble Levin, with a manifestation of interest, "a complaint against whom? and for what?"

"The viceroy has lately been pleased, to order that I should be left free and undisturbed in this donjon."

"True, seignior; and I have given directions that this order should be strictly obeyed."

"And yet, Seignior Governor, strangers are permitted to intrude and penetrate into my prison against my wishes."

"Who has dared to do so?" exclaimed the governor. "Name him!"

"Yourself, Seignior Governor!"

The haughty tone in which this answer was given, wounded the feelings of the general; and he replied with some warmth—

"You forget, sir, that my duty to the king is paramount to all other considerations."

"Even to the consideration which is due to the unfortunate," muttered Schumacker, as if to himself; "but that is a thing which has no real existence among men."

"Excuse me—excuse me—Count—I should say, Seignior Schumacker, I was wrong to be angry," replied the general. "I am the last to offend the unfortunate by a display of my power."

Schumacker was silent for a few moments, and then continued:

"Seignior Governor, there is something in your appearance, and the tone of your voice, that reminds me of a man I once knew. It was a long time since, you may be sure; for it was in my prosperity. His name was Levin de Knud—a Mèchlenbergher, I think. Did you ever know the fool?"

"I have known him," replied the general, quietly.

"Ah! you recollect him. Strange! I thought the prosperous never recollected any one."

"He was a captain in the Royal Guard, was he not?" inquired the governor.

"Yes, a simple captain, though the king was fond of him; but he cared more for pleasure than ambition. A singular fellow—the king's favorite—and yet, without ambition!"

"Well, I can understand that," observed the general.

"I always liked that Levin de Knud well enough, because he gave me no uneasiness. Though a favorite of the king, he was his real friend, and loved him for himself, and not for the favors he was able to grant him."

The governor would have interrupted the old man, but the latter had got upon a train of reflection, which, with his characteristic obstinacy, he insisted upon pursuing.

"A strange fellow he was, that Levin de Knud," he continued; "you know him, you say; then you must recollect what took place at the birth of his only son, who died soon after?"

"I recollect still better the circumstance attending his death," replied the general, in a faltering voice, passing his hand across his eyes.

"Well, the fact I refer to," continued

the indifferent Schumacker, "is known but to few persons, and though I could never understand the motive of it, still it illustrates the odd character of this man. The king, himself, was desirous of presenting this child at the baptismal fount—but what do you think? Levin refused, and selected a common beggar as the godfather of his boy! Can you comprehend the meaning of this act of folly?"

"I can," replied the general; "Captain Levin, in selecting one to watch over the soul of his child, doubtless thought that the prayer of the poor would avail more with God than the prayer of a king."

Schumacker thought a moment, and then said, "You are right."

Again the governor would have turned the discourse upon the subject of his visit, but the old man would not be diverted from the topic he had chosen.

"Excuse me; but since you do know this Captain Levin, let me talk a little more about him. He is the only one of those who, in the day of my prosperity, were about the court, whom I ever bring to my recollection without horror and disgust. But he, though he did carry his eccentricity to the verge of folly, was really in point of honor and noble qualities, one who had few imitators, and no equals."

"I do not agree with you there," replied the general; "Levin was a man very much like his fellows; there may have been some worse, but there were many better."

Schumacker folded his arms, and raising his eyes to heaven; "Yes," he exclaimed; "so it is, and was, and ever will be. Give one man the just praise he deserves, and you shall ever find some calumniator ready to defame him. Yes; mankind will ever poison that source from whence arises the pleasure of awarding to merit its due, as scanty as that source is."

"If you knew me, seignior," replied the general, "you would, at all events, acquit me of detracting from the merits of this Gen—Captain Levin."

"No, no; he has not his equal for loyalty and disinterestedness, and to maintain to the contrary, for the sake of lauding the execrable race of mankind at large, is a calumny."

"I assure you," returned the general, desirous to appease his singular opponent, "that I have no fault to find with the loyalty of Captain Levin."

"Yes, but you have done so. Did you not say that he was like all the rest of men?—and are they not, as a mass, false, ungrateful, treacherous, and selfish? Do you not know that Captain Levin gave

more than half his pay in charity, at Copenhagen?"

"I did not know that you knew it."

"There!" exclaimed the prisoner, triumphantly; "you thought I was ignorant of his good deeds, and that consequently you might slander him with impunity."

"No, no; I assure you."

"Oh, but you are mistaken. Do n't I know also, that he obtained from the king the command of a regiment for an officer who had wounded him in a duel, because he was his senior in rank, and justly entitled to it?"

"I certainly thought that had been a secret."

"Well, and if it was done in secret, Seignior Governor of Drontheim, I wish to know if it was any the less praiseworthy? Because Captain Levin sees fit to conceal his good actions, does that give you any right to deny them? Oh! I wish all men were like him. Why, I knew that man when he failed to obtain the pardon of a soldier who attempted to assassinate him, to settle an annuity upon the widow of his intended murderer."

"Well, who would not have done the same?"

Schumacker laughed:

"Who? You would not, I would not, no other man would have thought of such an act. You, because you wear the uniform of a general, and the decorations of these noble orders, think yourself a man of worth and merit. You are a general, and poor Levin is doubtless still a captain. He sought no reward for doing good—the foolish fellow, he never cared for his advancement."

"He never did, 'tis true, but the king in his bounty was mindful of him."

"In his bounty! in his justice, say, if indeed, there is such a thing as the justice of a king;—but tell me what the king has done for him?"

"The king has rewarded Levin de Knud far beyond his merits."

"Really! and you think so, do you? I suppose after serving faithfully as a captain for thirty years, the king has made him a major, and this high favor, noble general, you think beyond his deserts. The Persian proverb is true: 'The setting sun envies the rising moon.'"

"But, hear me!" exclaimed the general, who was borne down by the old man's impetuosity: "You will not permit me to explain."

"No! no! I've heard enough!" returned the other. "I thought at first, that you somewhat resembled what I recollect of

Levin de Knud; but I was mistaken, the resemblance has vanished."

"But listen for a moment?"

"What! to hear you prove that Levin de Knud is not worthy of this small recompense?"

"No! no! but——"

"Or, do you wish to prove that he is like the rest of mankind, a rogue, a hypocrite, a villain?"

"No! no! upon my honor, no——"

"Or that he has betrayed his friend? or persecuted his benefactor, as all of you do? or poisoned his father? or cut the throat of his mother? or——"

"Upon my word, you mistake me——"

"Now, do you know that he prevailed upon three of my judges to vote against inflicting upon me the punishment of death? And do you think I shall set by in cold blood, and hear you calumniate him behind his back? Yes! I tell you he exerted himself to save me, though I deserved it not at his hands; for I had done him no favor, and I am about as vile and wicked as the rest of you."

The position of the noble Levin, during this strange discussion, was grotesque enough. The object at once of the most outrageous insult and the sincerest praise, he knew not with what face to receive these abusive compliments and this complimentary abuse. It cannot be denied, however, that he was rather gratified than displeased; and finding it impossible to interrupt the prisoner in his violence, he permitted him to go on; which he did, railing at the vice and unworthiness of the whole human race, until at last he sunk exhausted into the arms of Ethel, who supported him to his chair.

The governor, it will be recollected, had not yet found an opportunity of introducing the all important topic, upon which he came to converse with Schumacker; and it must be confessed, that the more he saw of his prisoner, the more reluctant he became to do so. There was something so utterly at variance with his ideas of a wary and subtle conspirator, in the appearance and deportment of the irritable and broken-down misanthrope before him, that his suspicions had entirely vanished; and there was something so venerable, nay, almost sacred, in his deep misfortunes and fallen estate, that the generous-minded soldier shrunk from the task of further offending him, or wounding his feelings. Still General Levin saw the necessity, upon the prisoner's own account, of satisfying himself in relation to his ignorance and innocence of the insurrection, in order that he might, in turn, satisfy his royal master and the viceroy; and

therefore, he resolved to make one further effort to approach the subject, in the least offensive manner possible. In the most courteous and respectful tones, he once more began :

"Will you, Count Schumacker, do me the favor to be calm, while——"

Here he was again interrupted, but without any show of asperity ; for the style in which he had chosen to address his prisoner, coupling, as it did, the high title he had won with the more humble patronymic which was his birthright, seemed rather grateful to the old man.

"In the first place, will you do me the favor," interrupted Schumacker, "to give me one piece of information, in which I feel a great interest ? Your excellency has been pleased to inform me, but a few minutes since, that Captain Levin, of whom we were talking, has been rewarded for his services. Now, I should very much like to know, in what manner."

"His majesty, Seignior Griffenfeldt, has been pleased to raise him to the rank of general ; and for the last four-and-twenty years, he has grown old in the enjoyment of the royal favor, and the honors and emoluments which have been so graciously bestowed upon him."

Schumacker looked down for a moment, in silence, and then said, as if to himself :

"Yes ; this careless, unambitious officer, who bade fair to grow old a simple captain, will die at the head of the army ; while I, who struggled hard for place, and made sure to die high-chancellor, am growing old a prisoner of state, and may die on the scaffold." With this reflection, he again sunk into a fit of deep abstraction, to arouse him from which, Ethel directed his attention to the window.

"Look there, father !" she exclaimed ; "there, away in the north, is a fire, which I do not recollect ever to have seen before."

Night had fallen, and far in the northern horizon glimmered a light, which seemed as if it proceeded from the summit of some distant mountain. Schumacker, whose attention was with difficulty aroused, seemed hardly to notice it, and made no reply ; but it had a different effect upon the governor, who thought it was probably some beacon, lighted by the insurgents, and who was thereby recalled to the unwelcome task, which he had not yet been able to complete, and he again addressed the prisoner :

"Seignior Griffenfeldt," he began, "I am sorry to disturb you, but you really must give me leave——"

"I understand you, Seignior Governor," replied the prisoner ; "it is not enough, that I must wear out my days in this prison, but you must be permitted to break in upon my solitude for the purpose of probing my griefs, and enjoying my sorrows as an eye witness. Why, in the name of all that is merciful, could not Levin de Knud, whose rank, you say, is equal to your own, have been appointed to the situation which you fill ? He, at least, would not have taken pleasure in annoying the unfortunate."

Again the general was staggered, he actually seemed to himself to have changed places with the man whom he had come to accuse, and felt as if he were called upon to answer a grave and weighty charge ; but he made another effort to rally, and continued :

"But, Seignior Griffenfeldt, do not doubt that if his duty had compelled Levin de Knud to——"

"But, Seignior Governor, I do doubt !" ejaculated Schumacker, "and I can assure you, he would have refused with indignation and disdain to fill the office of a spy, or perform the duty of a torturer upon any unhappy man, who was placed in his charge. Governor, I know him better than you ; he would never play the part of a turnkey or an executioner. Now sir, go on ; what does your excellency want with me ?"

But this last shot had finished the general : "I cannot do it," said he to himself. "What ! torment this poor old man upon vague and groundless suspicion ? not I, by Heaven !" His resolution was quickly formed, and as quickly acted upon : advancing hastily toward his astonished captive, he seized his hand, and wrung it warmly ; then exclaiming, "farewell, Count Schumacker, preserve your good opinion of Levin de Knud ;" he left the apartment.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RUINS OF ARBAR.

THE traveller of the present day, will hardly find upon the snow-clad cliffs which surround the lake of Smiasen, any remains of that pile which the Norwegians of the seventeenth century called the ruins of Arbar. The date of the construction of this edifice, the style of its architecture, and even the derivation of its name, were unknown at that time, nor has modern research ever thrown any light upon the subject. All that we do know is, that at the time when the events which we are detailing took place, there was a path through

the forest, which bounded the east side of the lake; and that this path, after winding through the remains of ruined towers and climbing the steep ascent of the cliffs, led to a huge vault, or opening, which penetrated the face of the mountain about midway of its height. This vault, at present entirely hidden by the debris of the avalanches, which have since fallen over it, was then the entrance of a long arched gallery hewn in the rock, which pierced the mountain from side to side. The gallery was dimly lighted by air holes which were here and there perforated through the superincumbent mass, until they reached the surface, and it terminated in a large oblong sort of saloon, the inner portion of which was excavated in the rock, and the exterior built up with a cyclopean wall of huge stones. About this apartment, on every side, were niches occupied by colossal images of granite, carved by some rude, but bold hand, and intended, doubtless, to portray the ancient demons and war gods of Scandinavian antiquity.

The only light which penetrated into this capacious and lofty hall, came through a door or opening, rudely fashioned in the wall, opposite the mouth of the gallery. This opening was irregular, or rather grotesque in its form, as if fashioned in accordance with the wild features of the architect, who constructed this strange retreat; and it might better perhaps be called a window than a door, as it opened directly upon a precipice of immense depth. From the door-sill of this entrance, depended a sort of ladder or winding stairway, which retreated under the overhanging rock, and led no one knew where.

Above the centre of this apartment, a gigantic tower reared its massive form above the crest of the mountain—for an isolated peak of which it was often mistaken from afar—it was apparently connected with no other structure, unless, indeed, it should be conceded that a range of rocks near at hand, upon a sort of plateau, inaccessible to the boldest mountaineer, and which in their outline resembled some vast arcade, were the work of man. Such as they were, however, this tower and this seeming arcade, were called by the neighboring peasantry, the ruins of Arbar; but what was the origin of this name or of the monuments themselves, as we have said before, was unknown at that early day.

Upon a block of granite, probably the remains of an ancient altar, in the centre of the elliptical saloon, sat a man of low stature, clad in a garment made of the skins of beasts. It was now about the

hour of noon; but, so dim was the light which penetrated into this gloomy hall, that it was impossible to discover the nature of his occupation, or the character of the object which lay at his feet, and over which he was stooping. All that could be gained by observation was, that from the recumbent mass, which bore some indistinct resemblance to the human form, proceeded, at intervals, inarticulate sounds, like sighs or groans; and that the strange man often lifted to his lips a cup, which seemed fashioned from a skull, and drank deep draughts of some dark and foaming liquid.

All at once, he started up, and exclaimed—

"I hear footsteps in the gallery! Can it be, that the chancellor of the two realms has arrived already?"

These words were succeeded by a peal of fiendish laughter, which died away in a sort of savage growl, like the murmuring of a wild beast. His merriment was responded to by a ferocious howl from the gallery.

"Aha!" cried the host of the ruins of Arbar. "Not a man—though still an enemy. It is a wolf."

At this moment, a wolf, of enormous size, emerged from the gallery, and pausing for a moment, crouched to the earth, and, with an oblique and stealthy step—his eyes glowing like living coals—he approached the man. His intended prey quietly crossed his arms, and regarded the coming monster attentively.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "here comes old gray-skin, at last—the oldest wolf in the forest of Smiasen—as they say. Good day, wolf. How your eyes shine! You must be hungry; and the smell of these dead bodies has procured me the favor of a visit. I'm glad to see you, wolf. I've long wished to meet you. They say, in the forest, that you cannot die. We'll see how that is."

Here the animal, whom he had permitted to approach within striking distance, with a single bound, and an angry snarl, threw himself upon the man. Without moving from his position, the latter, quick as lightning, caught his opponent by the throat, and held him, for a moment, gasping before his face; and then, as if unwilling, without further diversion, to finish the encounter, dashed him to the earth. A contest then ensued, which, at a little distance, might well have been mistaken for the death-struggle of two maddened and infuriate brutes. There was the ferocious roar, and quick, harsh snorting of the

wild beast; but it came not from the wolf. There was the yell of pain and agony; but it came not from the man. In the midst of this melée, a third combatant appeared upon the scene. Aroused from his sleep, in an obscure corner of the apartment, a huge white bear sprang forward, and seized the wolf; but a buffet from the man, and the sharp reproof—"Friend, who bade you meddle? Begone, sir!" sent him at once, howling to his bed. The battle was soon over; and the wolf—his bloody jaws torn open, and his heart torn out, by the iron claws of the demon—laid, breathless, upon the floor of the apartment.

"Lay there, wolf," said the man, with a grim smile. A long life of blood and carnage have you spent; and when you smelt out more, this morning, you little thought your own time had come. Many is the traveller, benighted in the woods of Smiasen, whom you have devoured. Perchance I was wrong to kill you, for you killed men; but I wanted your skin: that of a man is too thin to keep out the cold of this climate."

So saying, he took his axe, and proceeded to divest his late opponent of his grisly hide; and the dreaded wolf of Smiasen, scarce yet cold, soon lay naked and bloody upon the rock beneath his feet.

While thus occupied, the bear had again aroused himself, and stealing furtively across the apartment, had made his way to the ill-defined object we have described as resembling the body of a man; and lying in the shade of the altar-stone, where the man was previously seated. From this quarter now arose a sound like the gnashing of teeth, accompanied by weak, but plaintive groans and sighs of agony.

At last the noise reached the ear of the man. He sprung to his feet, and called out—

"Friend, ah ha! you wretch, how dare you? Come here, sir."

With this, he seized a huge stone and hurled it at the brute. Stunned by the blow, the animal quickly left his prey, and licking his bloody chaps, crawled submissively to the feet of his master; rolled himself over, upon his back, and held up his paws, as if entreating for pardon.

His submission was accepted, and a good understanding once more established between the two monsters; for our host of the ruins of Arbar, was, certainly, as much entitled to that epithet as his four-footed companion.

"There," said he at length, when he had divested the wolf of his skin, and thrown it across his shoulders, "make

your supper off that, and leave mine to me."

The bear, after smelling at the carcass, for a moment, shook his head with a discontented air, and turned again toward his master.

"I understand you," replied the man. "It is lifeless—and you prefer something that still palpitates, between your teeth. Really, you are getting refined in your pleasures, friend. I admire your taste; for it is my own. Here, I must share with you, I suppose."

So saying, he took his axe and bent again over the human body. The sighs and groans had ceased, but the cracking of bones beneath the blows of the axe was heard, and the man soon threw toward the exterior opening, a portion that he had detached from the bloody mass beneath his feet. The bear threw himself upon it with a bound, and backed with it out of the window, and down the suspended ladder; but not so quick but that it was possible to discover in the mutilated fragment, a human arm, clad in the sleeve of the splendid uniform of the regiment of Monckholm.

At this moment, a tall man enveloped in a long mantle, having a lantern in his hand, made his appearance at the mouth of the gallery. He approached the altar-stone, where the host of the ruins of Arbar was seated, with folded arms and a frowning brow, cast the reflection of the light upon his face, and regarded him with attention.

"Wo to you, who are led hither by mind and not by instinct," was the salutation of his host.

The new-comer, who appeared rather surprised than alarmed, continued his investigation without reply.

"Look at me well," continued the other "though you may never live to boast of having seen me. Well, what do you think of me? I am a man like yourself; I have a head and limbs, flesh, and blood, and bones like your own; except that mine will not feed the beast and fowls of the air as yours are presently destined to do."

The stranger at length replied, in a low but firm tone of voice; his principal apprehension seeming to be the fear of being overheard:

"Listen! I come not as an enemy, but as a friend."

"Then why do you come in the form of man?" interrupted the other.

"My intention is to render you a service, if indeed you be he I seek."

"That is, you seek some service at my hands? Man, you waste your time—I

render no service but to such as are weary of life."

"You speak like him I seek, but your stature—Hans of Iceland is a giant—you cannot be him?"

"It is the first time any one ever ventured to doubt it in my presence."

"Can it be?" exclaimed the stranger approaching him; "but Hans is of colossal height."

"Add my renown to my stature, and I shall overtop Hecla."

"Indeed! but answer me: are you really Hans of Klipstader, in Iceland?"

"I'll not answer you with words," replied the other, raising himself and glaring upon his questioner with an expression which caused him to recoil in terror.

"Pardon me, I pray you! I am convinced!" exclaimed the other, in alarm, and casting an anxious look toward the gallery, as if he regretted that he had ever quitted it. "Be calm! I repeat that I only came here to render you a service."

When he entered the apartment, the newcomer, ignorant of the personage whom he was about to encounter, had resolved to preserve the utmost *sang froid* in his interview with him; but when the monster drew himself up, and exhibited his massive limbs and bloody claws, and threw upon him his withering look, he was appalled, and shuddered in every limb, like the fisherman who, in handling an eel, finds he has grasped a deadly serpent.

"To render service!" repeated the monster. "Have you come to tell me what fountain I can poison? what village I can burn? or where I can find an arquebusier of Monckholm, to murder?"

"Perchance I have! Listen: the miners are in a state of revolt—you know the horrors which attend upon civil war?"

"Yes! murder, violation, sacrilege, burning, and pillage."

"All those I offer you."

"I need not your assistance; all these I can enjoy without your aid."

The hideous sneer which accompanied this reply, caused the stranger to tremble again, but he took courage, and proceeded:

"I propose to you, in the name of the miners, to lead the revolt."

Hans paused for a moment, and then asked,

"Is it, indeed, in the name of the miners that you make me this offer?"

The stranger seemed a little disconcerted at this question; but confident that he was unknown, recovered himself, and replied in the affirmative.

"And for what have the miners revolted?"

"To free themselves from the royal tutelage."

"For nothing else?" demanded the other, in tones of mockery.

"Yes: they seek to free the prisoner of Monckholm."

"And is that all?" continued Hans, in the same tone.

"I know no other reason," stammered the other.

"Ah! you know no other reason!" repeated Hans, contemptuously.

The stranger, anxious to escape this embarrassing train of inquiry, drew a heavy purse from beneath his cloak, which he threw before the man he sought to inveigle.

"There," he exclaimed, "is the first portion of your pay, as commander-in-chief."

Hans spurned the gold contemptuously with his foot.

"I need it not! Do you think, if I wanted either your gold or your blood, I should wait for your permission to take it?"

The stranger started back in surprise and alarm.

"It is a present which the royal miners commissioned me to give you," he said.

"I need it not!" repeated the other. "Men will part with their souls, or anything they possess, except their lives, and those you must take."

"Well, then, you will allow me to announce to the miners that you accept the command of their forces?"

"No!" replied the other, harshly.

The stern brevity of this refusal grated unpleasantly upon the ear of the pretended envoy of the miners.

"How am I to understand you?" said he, in return.

"I will not accept the command!"

"Is it possible you can reject an offer which presents so many inducements to one of your character?"

"I can pillage farms, destroy hamlets, and murder soldiers or peasants, without their aid or yours!"

"But, recollect that all this you may do with impunity, if at the head of the miners."

"Is it in their name you offer me impunity?" asked the other, with a significant sneer.

"I will not pretend to answer you," replied the stranger. "I offer you impunity, by the authority of an exalted personage, who takes an interest in this insurrection."

"But how is this exalted personage to

make sure that his own neck may not be placed in jeopardy?"

"If you knew who he was, you would have no doubts of his ability to protect both himself and his friends."

"Who is he, then?"

"Ah, that is what I must not tell you," returned the stranger."

Hans advanced toward him, and tapping him upon the shoulder said, with the same contemptuous sneer lurking about his features:

"Well, shall I tell you?"

The man in the mantle started in surprise and disgust;—surprise at the strange confidence with which the monster spoke of what he thought was most profoundly concealed, and disgust at the familiarity which he so suddenly assumed.

Taking no notice of his emotion, however, the other continued:

"Fool! I have been jesting with you! I know all! This puissant personage, of whom you speak so mysteriously, is the high chancellor of Denmark and Norway—and you yourself are the man!"

It was indeed the chancellor, arrived at the ruins of Arbar, toward which we left him travelling. He had taken upon himself the task of securing the service of the brigand. His disguise and the secrecy of his movements he had believed complete; and how Hans of Iceland had been able to penetrate the one, and made himself master of the other, he sought to conjecture in vain. Could Musdamon have betrayed him? True it was that he had suggested to the count the project of presenting himself in person to the brigand; but what interest could he have in displaying his treason at that moment? Could the monster have discovered him by examining the papers found upon the bodies of his victims? he thought not, for, besides Musdamon, his son Frederic was the only one acquainted with his purposes; and Frederic, frivolous as he was, would scarcely reveal a secret of such monstrous importance. And then, Frederic was in garrison at Monckholm; at least, so the chancellor thought. What was the true solution of this problem, the reader is perhaps as capable of ascertaining as was the Count d'Ahlefeldt; and if he peruses the remainder of this chapter, he will have an opportunity of deciding as to the probability of the count's surmise in regard to the position of his son.

The count possessed, in a most eminent degree, the quality of presence of mind. When first he heard himself named so abruptly by the brigand, he could not avoid a

change of color, nor suppress an exclamation of surprise; but in a moment after he renewed his self-possession, and with a calm and dignified expression of countenance, replied:

"Well, to be frank with you, I am the chancellor; and, in return, I ask you to be equally frank."

The other interrupted him with a burst of laughter.

"Now," said he, "after telling you your name, you want me to tell you my own again?"

"No; but I wish you to tell me, with sincerity, how you came to know me?"

"What! do you not know that Hans of Iceland can see through mountains?"

"But, seriously," insisted the count; "come, I am your friend."

"Give me your hand, Count d'Ahlefeldt," cried the monster, in a tone of brutal familiarity; and then looking him in the face, he continued: "Do you know, that I believe that if our two souls were at this moment disembodied, satan himself would be puzzled to decide which belonged to the man and which to the monster?"

The haughty nobleman bit his lips; but, between his fear of the brigand and his desire to secure his services, he manifested no impatience; far otherwise: he persisted in his solicitations, that Hans would not be so unmindful of his own interest as to forego the opportunity which was now offered to him.

"Once more," he continued, "reflect, I entreat of you, before you reject my proposal."

"Once more, chancellor of Norway, and for the last time, I tell you *no*!"

"I hardly expected this, after the eminent service you have already done me."

"What service?" demanded the other.

"Did you not assassinate Captain Dispolson?" answered the chancellor.

"That may be, Count d'Ahlefeldt, I did not know him. Who was he?"

"What! have you not still in your possession the steel casket, of which he was the bearer?"

This question seemed to recall something to the mind of the murderer; he paused for a moment in deep reflection, and then replied:

"Yes, I do recollect a man with a steel casket; it was at the sands of Urchtal."

"Well, then, you will return me that casket, will you not? it is of the utmost importance to me; and you may name your own reward. If you have it not you know where it is; and that you can tell me, certainly."

Hans, struck with the chancellor's anxiety to have the casket, replied, "It is of great importance to you, you say;—now suppose I tell you where you can find it, what shall be my reward?"

"Whatever you choose," returned the chancellor.

"Well then, I will not tell you."

"Now you are jesting; think what a favor you will render me."

"That is precisely what I am thinking of."

"Tell me, then: I will insure you an immense fortune, and ask your pardon from the king."

"Ask pardon for yourself, rather, chancellor," replied the other, in tones of thunder. "Listen! the tiger preys not upon the hyena. I spare your life because you are as wicked as I am myself, and that every moment of your existence gives birth to some new calamity, which will sooner or later befall the cursed race of man. But come here no more! I am not given to spare any one, and for lack of other prey, I sometimes destroy the wicked. As to the captain, don't think that it was on your account I slew him. It was his uniform of Monckholm, which caused his destruction, as it did that of the wretch whose remains lay there, and whom you cannot suppose I murdered to do you a service." So saying, he seized the count by the arm, and directed his attention to the mutilated body which lay in the shade near by.

While he was yet speaking, the light from the lantern fell upon this fearful object, and discovered the corpse of a young man in the uniform of an officer of the regiment of Monckholm. The chancellor cast one look of horror and dismay upon it, and was turning away; when his attention was rivetted by the sight of features, which, disfigured as they were by agony and stained with blood and dirt, he knew too well. The unhappy father uttered one piercing shriek, and exclaimed, "My God! 'tis Frederic! 'tis my son!"

It may seem incredible, that the domestic affections should have a place in the heart of a man like the Count d'Ahlefeldt, as his character has been delineated in the foregoing pages; probably he was himself unconscious of the affection he bore his son, until he saw him stretched lifeless before him. But then it was, that for the first time, he realized how much of the heavy load of guilt and atrocity he had voluntarily assumed, was borne for the sake of one who was to be the successor to his name, his honors, and the greatness for

which he had not scrupled to barter all that was truly valuable here, and all he could hope for hereafter. The suddenness of the shock, too, overcame him; he had thought Frederic at Monckholm, whither he had sent him, for the base and unhallowed purpose to which we have heretofore referred; but when he found him thus maimed and mutilated—when he reflected upon the nature of the monster, into whose fangs he had fallen; when he saw before him the marks of the fiendish cruelty to which one—whom he supposed at least was of his own flesh and blood—had been subjected, emotions of unknown horror and dismay penetrated his very soul; and the wretched father, wringing his hands with groans and tears, continued to ejaculate, "My son! my son!"

The wild laugh of the monster, mingled strangely with the wailings and lamentations of the bereaved parent. "By Ingolphe!" he exclaimed, "count, you may call him till doomsday, but you will hardly awake him;" and then dropping his mask of merriment and mockery, a terrible frown flitted across his brow as he said, in a harsh and sullen tone: "Mourn *your* son if you will, I revenge *mine*!"

At this instant, the noise of coming footsteps resounded through the arched gallery, and four men of lofty stature, armed to the teeth, made their appearance at the entrance of the saloon. They were conducted by one of lesser proportions, who bore in one hand a lighted torch, and a drawn sword in the other. "Seignior," cried the one last mentioned, "we heard your voice, and have hurried to your assistance." The new-comers, as will readily be imagined, were Musdamon and the escort of the count, which had accompanied him on the route to Arbar; they were bold and hardy men, selected for their great physical strength, and skillful bearing, from the numerous household of the chancellor; but when the light of the torch fell upon the truculent visage of the monster—the disfigured body of his victim, and the horror-stuck features of their master—they, for a moment recoiled, in evident consternation, at the scene before them.

Their coming, however, roused the count, and the hope of vengeance which it held forth, at once restored him to the use of his faculties.

"Death to this assassin!" he exclaimed, drawing his sword; "kill him! kill him! he has murdered my son!"

"Murdered the Seignior Frederic?" cried Musdamon, without, however, changing a feature,

"Yes!" reiterated the count, furious with rage; "kill him! kill him!" and the whole six threw themselves upon the monster, who slowly retreated toward the opening, with a growl of impatience and anger, but without any show of alarm.

He defended himself from any harm, by the dexterous use of his axe, which, however, he seemed inclined to use with caution, as if unwilling to destroy one whose power and inclination to do ill, he respected as nearly equal to his own, or even to crush the instruments of his atrocity.

Encouraged by the retreat of Hans, the count and his men pressed on, redoubling their exertions, and their cries of "Down with the demon! down with him! force him down the precipice!"

"The stars will fall before I do," returned Hans scornfully; and placing to his lips a horn, which hung by his side, he sounded a note, which was responded to by the lengthened howl of a wild beast. A moment after, the head of an enormous white bear was seen to rise from the exterior, above the sill of the opening; and Hans of Iceland, after disarming nearly all of his pursuers by a sweep of his axe, threw himself upon the back of his four-footed ally, who, in obedience to his signal, precipitately descended the ladder, which we have mentioned as suspended from the face of the rock. The count and his followers, recovering from their surprise, hastened to the opening, but the monsters had already disappeared beneath the shelving rock; and the ladder, torn from its fastenings, was drawn after them by an unseen hand, before pursuit could be made, even had any of their number been hardy enough to have undertaken it.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DOCTRINE OF COMPENSATIONS—THE DEPARTURE OF THE GOVERNOR.

How often do we discover the marks of the most profound design, in the occurrences which, by men, are attributed to chance or accident.

For example: if, when Frederic d'Ahlefeldt was displaying, in the saloons of Copenhagen, the graces of his person, and the splendor of his attire, to the ladies of the court of Denmark and Norway, he had been told, "This brilliant uniform in which you pride yourself, will cost you your life—a monster, in human form, will drink your warm blood, as you drink these red wines of France and Bohemia—your curled and perfumed locks, which scent the at-

mosphere of the palace, will be soiled with the dust which covers the floor of a wild beast's den—and this arm, which you offer so gayly to the fair dames of Charlottenburgh, will be hacked off with a butcher's axe, and thrown for food to a hungry bear; he would have greeted the prophet who thus foretold his doom, with the loud laugh of scorn, or silent sneer of contempt. And yet, such was to be his fate—the elements of mischief were already at work, and from the hands of those to whom he was most dear, and who were there planning how to gratify their own revenge, by means of the vicious appetite of their son; he was to receive his death-warrant.

Had not the count and countess plotted the destruction of the captain's daughter by the basest means, Frederic would not have been sent to Monckholm. Nor would he have been detached by the protector whom Providence had raised up for the defence of the innocent, to the dangerous post where he met the sworn destroyer of all who wore the trappings in which he so much delighted. Thus, in seeking to dishonor the daughter of misfortune, the haughty pair sacrificed their son, their house, and the sole representative of their wealth and honors. Their hearts were wrung, and their aspiring hopes were blasted, by the exercise of their own spirit of intrigue and cunning, converted, by a superintending Providence, into an instrument for their own chastisement.

Meanwhile these events were unknown at Drontheim. The morning after his visit to Monckholm, the governor ordered his carriage early, hoping that he should be able to take his departure for Berghen, before the Countess d'Ahlefeldt should awake. In this, however, he was disappointed, for while signing some dispatches for the bishop, into whose hands he was to commit the government, and giving some last directions, the lady of the chancellor was announced.

This *contretemps* annoyed the old soldier (who would at any time have preferred to face a battery of cannon, than to be exposed to the artifices of such a woman,) exceedingly. He was sufficiently a man of gallantry to conceal his chagrin, and receive his visitor with due courtesy, though his patience was not a little tried, when that atrocious personage, assuming an air of great familiarity, asked him in a sort of confidential whisper:

"Well, my noble general, what did he say to you?"

The general pretended not to under-

stand, and replied with an unconscious stare:

"Say to me! who? Paul? He told me the carriage was waiting, my lady."

But this evasion did not save him, for the countess resumed:

"I refer to the prisoner of Monckholm, general."

"Oh! the prisoner!"

"Yes! Did he answer your interrogatories satisfactorily?"

"Oh! why—yes!" returned the general, somewhat embarrassed.

The countess perceived his embarrassment, and continued hastily:

"You say yes. Have you obtained the proofs of his connection with the miners?"

The general exclaimed at once:

"Lady, he is innocent!" and then stopped short, conscious that he was expressing the conviction of his heart, rather than of his judgment.

"Innocent!" repeated the lady, fixing her keen gaze upon the general, who, knowing how ill he had played his part of inquisitor, again became embarrassed and impatient:

"Yes, innocent, if your ladyship pleases!" he exclaimed.

"If I please!" she cried, with a wicked laugh.

"Noble countess," said the general, "with your permission, I will make my report of my interview with the ex-chancellor to the viceroy;" and saluting her profoundly, he sought refuge in his carriage.

"Go in welcome, my old knight errant!" said the countess to herself, when she had reached her apartments. "And now, their protectors having taken leave, our enemies are delivered into our hands. Go! your departure is the signal of my Frederic's return. How could you dare to send the most accomplished cavalier in Copenhagen to that savage mountain post? Fortunately, however, he can easily be recalled. Elizabeth," she continued, addressing her favorite maid, "don't forget to send to Berghen, for two dozen hair combs and brushes, and any new romance of Madame Scudery that may have been translated; and recollect, and wash his monkey in rose water, every morning."

"So, Seignior Frederic is coming back, my lady?" said the girl.

"Yes; and in order that he may be glad to see me, we must have everything ready for him when returns. I wish to prepare a surprise for him."

Poor mother!

CHAPTER XXVI.

ORDONER PURSUES HIS PATH ALONE TO
WALDERHOG.

As soon as he could descend from the tower, which had afforded him, from its height, a glimpse of the spires of Monckholm, Ordoner called aloud for Spiagudry, and for a long time sought him assiduously in every part of the ruins; but the echo alone responded to the sound of his voice, and no signs of his old companion was he able to discover. Surprised but not alarmed at his disappearance, the young man, after pondering for a time upon the cause of it, and considering what course would be best for him to pursue, came to the conclusion that Benignus had taken fright at some imaginary object of terror, and fled from the building. To give him time to return, he resolved to wait till daylight, and spend the night in the tower. So, after partaking of what remained of the old keeper's coarse fare, he wrapped himself in his mantle, and reclining by the fire, slept quietly till the dawn.

Rising with the sun, he resumed his search for his companion; but could find nothing except his knapsack and cloak, his desertion of which cherished articles, seemed to betoken that his flight had been very precipitate. At length, satisfied that he was not upon the rock of Ælmæ, and recollecting that on the morrow he was to meet Hans at the grotto of Walderhog, he determined to take his departure alone.

Ordoner, as we have said, had been a traveller, and his topographical knowledge of the country was good. He knew the general direction of Walderhog, and though unacquainted with the shortest path, he still felt confident that he should reach it in time; sooner, perhaps, than if he had been guided by Benignus, who, though better acquainted with the country, was sometimes deterred, by his fears, from choosing the best route, and whose halting gait was but ill calculated to keep pace with the rapid stride of his companion.

He accordingly quitted the rock of Ælmæ, regarding, with a sigh, the tower of Vermond, the proscribed, which had become, in his mind, indissolubly connected with Monckholm, and took his way to the northwest. His path was solitary, and he had no longer the savant beside him, to tell him the proportions of quartz and sillex, which entered into the composition of every hill; or, to repeat the legend which appertained to every time-honored ruin; or, to decide whether this or that ravine, or cliff, was the work of the deluge, or of

volcanic action. But he, occasionally, came across an inhabitant of that thinly settled country; and their various answers to the questions he put to them, in regard to the place of his destination, afforded present amusement, and food for subsequent reflection. Sometimes, he met a travelling merchant, who, acquainted merely with the names of places, their bearings and distances, would answer, with business-like brevity:

"Keep to the northwest, until you reach the village of Hervallyn—then cross the ravine of Dodlysax, and you will be able to reach Sarb."

But it was when he put his queries to a peasant, that Ordoner received answers of a different and more exciting character.

"Walderhog! Walderhog!" would be the reply. "What! the cavern where the demon dwells? where the stones sing, and the dry bones dance! It cannot be there, that your worship thinks of going?"

"That is just the place," Ordoner would reply.

"Why, what can ail your worship? Have you lost your mother? or have you been burnt out from your home? or has your neighbor stolen your fattest hog? or ran off with your sister?"

"No, nothing of that kind."

"Oh, some powerful magician has cast his spell over your worship. I presume that must be it."

"No matter; can you tell me the direction?"

"That I can, seignior. You are in the right direction now. Keep to the northwest. You'll reach it easy enough; but whether you will ever find your way back again, is a very different thing:" and the peasant would make the sign of the cross, and go on his way.

It was quite dark when Ordoner, after making his way through the woods and thickets that skirted the ravine of Dodlysax, reached the little village of Sarb; the place, it will be recollected, where our unhappy acquaintance, Benignus Spiagudry, had proposed to fix his head-quarters during the encounter between the cavalier and the demon. As he approached, the smell of tar and sea-stores apprised him that the inhabitants of this hamlet were engaged in the fisheries; and confident of a friendly reception, from a class of people whose hospitality is noted in Norway, he rapped at the door of the first hut which he discovered through the gloom.

"Come in," answered a voice from the interior; and at the same instant a ready hand opened the door, and Ordoner stood

within the conical habitation of a Norwegian fisherman. This structure was circular in form and made of wood and earth, tent-shaped, with an opening at the top to permit the escape of the smoke. In the centre blazed a huge fire of the Norway pine and fish offal; about it were the fisherman, his wife and children; and on one side was a table, spread with a sail-cloth, upon which were platters of wood and cups of earthenware. Near the wall of the building was a pile of otter and bear skins, which constituted the bedding of the family, and of such guests as it might please Providence to send them. The whole interior of this establishment wore an air of cheerfulness and content, though it required a moment or two before the eye could penetrate through the dense smoke which arose from the dainties of the sea—which were cooking at the fire—so as to observe the happy faces which brightened at the coming of the stranger.

The fisherman and his wife greeted Ordoner with a hearty welcome. The hospitality of these people has already been noticed; but, aside from this, the inhabitants of this remote region are gifted with a degree of curiosity which renders them particularly partial to travellers.

"Seignior," said the fisherman, "your worship must be both cold and hungry; here are food and fire—be warmed and filled; after which, perhaps, you will condescend to inform us whence you come, whither you go, and what of news is stirring in the part from whence you came?"

"Yes, seignior," added the wife, "you will find this bread good; and a piece of fish with a little whale oil will help to relish it."

"Or if your worship does not like the fare of St. Usulph," continued the host, "and you can tarry a while, I can promise you a piece of hare, or a pheasant; for we are waiting the return of one of the most renowned hunters in the three provinces; is he not, my good maase?"

The fisherman called his wife by this name, which is the Norwegian term for puss, according to the custom of the country, where it passes current as a token of endearment.

"The best hunter," replied the wife; "indeed he is; it is my own brother, Kenybol, God bless him; he passes some days with us; and, seignior stranger, we shall all be glad to have you partake of what we are providing for him, for he, too, is a traveller."

"Thank you, my kind hostess," replied Ordoner; "a morsel of your excellent fish

and bread must content me. I regret that I cannot stay to meet your brother; but I must depart immediately."

The good maase was gratified with the compliment paid to her fish and bread, but very unwilling to lose her guest so soon.

"You are very good, seignior, to like our poor fare," she replied; "but you cannot think of leaving us to-night."

"I must."

"Oh, do not venture upon the mountains at this hour, and in such weather!"

"My business is pressing."

The answers of the young man piqued the curiosity of his entertainers to the utmost. The fisherman rose and said:

"You are in the house of Christopher Baldas Braal, fisherman of the hamlet of Sarb."

"Maase Kennybol is his wife and servant," added the hostess.

It is the custom of the peasantry of Norway, when they would politely ascertain the name of a stranger, in this manner to announce their own.

"For myself," replied Ordoner, "I am one who is neither sure of the name he carries, nor the road he travels."

This singular response, still further perplexed the fisherman.

"By the crown of Gormon the old!" he said; "I did think there was but one man in Norway at this time, who did not know how to call himself; and that is the young Baron Thorvic, who, 'tis said, is to be made Count Danneskiold, upon the occasion of his marriage with the grand-chancellor's daughter. I congratulate you, seignior stranger, upon your resemblance, in that particular, to the son of the viceroy."

"Perhaps," added the wife, "although your worship is not inclined to tell us anything about yourself, you may be so kind as to give us some information in regard to that grand marriage, which all the country is talking about, and which my husband heard of at Drontheim."

"Yes," continued the fisherman, "I did. In one month from this date, the son of the viceroy will marry the daughter of the grand-chancellor."

"I doubt it," observed Ordoner.

"You doubt it, seignior? I can assure you it is a fact. I have it from the best authority. I was so informed by Seignior Paul, the valet de chambre of the baron—I should say Count Danneskiold himself. Has any new difficulty sprung up within a week? Is there any serious obstacle to this marriage?"

"I rather think there is," replied Ordoner.

"Is it possible, that I have been deceived? Well, there's no use of kindling your fire before you've caught your fish. What will come of all these grand preparations? and pray, seignior, as you speak with such confidence, from whom do you get your information?"

"From no one," said Ordoner. "It is merely an idea of my own."

Not even Norwegian courtesy, could restrain the fisherman and his wife from a hearty fit of laughter at this (as it appeared to them) extremely simple reply.

"A thousand pardons, seignior," exclaimed the host, when he had a little recovered his composure; "but it is evident that you are not only a traveller, but a stranger to this country. Do you think that matters of such importance will eventuate just as suits your fancy? You might as well expect to arrange the weather, and settle whether it shall be clear or cloudy to-morrow."

Here the fisherman, who, like all Norwegians, was, or thought himself intimately versed in the affairs of state, took upon himself to explain to Ordoner the policy which had dictated this marriage.

"First, there was the great family of d'Ahlefeldt, the prime-minister and favorite of the king; a union between it and that of the viceroy, was much for its interest. The king desired it, and the viceroy could not refuse the king. Then the young couple themselves, it was said, were desperately attached. In fact, there was every reason why the match should take place, and none why it should not; and he, Braal, the fisherman, only wished he was as sure of killing the sea-dog, which destroyed so many fish in Master Brick's dike, as he was that the Baron Thorvic would marry the grand-chancellor's daughter."

To all this edifying discourse, Ordoner listened with silence, and with exemplary patience. The trouble of a reply, indeed, if he had contemplated making any, he was saved by the arrival of another guest.

"It is he! 'tis my brother!" exclaimed masse, whose attention to the sage discourse of her husband, no event, less than the appearance of the brother she was so fond of, could have diverted.

The husband, while the children clung around the neck of the new-comer, stretched out his hand gravely, and said, "welcome my brother;" and then turning to Ordoner, "seignior, this is our brother, the renowned hunter Kennybol, from the mountains of Keole."

"A good evening to you all," returned the hunter, taking off his bear-skin cap.

Brother, I've made out about as well hunting upon your shores, as you would have done, fishing in our mountains; I might as well have been chasing the witch-lights in the swamps, of a dark night. Sister, you are the first puss I've seen to-day. I hope you have not depended upon me to provide the supper, for this miserable heath-cock is all I've been able to get, in a tramp which has lasted till this time."

Thus saying, he divested himself of his accoutrements, and threw a large white ptarmigan upon the table, remarking with a contemptuous air, "that it was not worth the powder and lead he had thrown away upon it. But never mind," he muttered between his teeth; "my good arquebuss will soon find better game. If there are no chamois nor deer skins to be won in this low country, there are plenty of green coats and red breeches to be spoiled."

This odd remark, though but half heard, was not thrown away upon the inquisitive Maase.

"Hem!" she began, "my dear brother, what was that you were saying just now?"

"I was saying that there was always a goblin dancing under a woman's tongue."

"You are right, brother Kennybol," cried the fisherman; "the daughters of Eve have lost none of the old lady's curiosity. So the less you say about green jackets, the better."

"Brother Braal," replied the mountaineer, "I tell my secrets only to my musket, and then I'm sure they will not be repeated."

"They say," observed the fisherman, "that there is a revolt among the miners. Do you know anything of it?"

The other pulled his cap over his brow, cast a furtive glance at the stranger, and then an expressive one upon his brother. "Silence!" he muttered, in a low deep tone.

The fisherman shook his head, as he replied, "The fish, brother, is ever silent, but for all that he does not escape the net."

For a few moments, not a word was said; all seemed buried in reflection, except the children, who were picking the ptarmigan, and the wife, who was waiting impatiently to catch something more, with which to satiate her curiosity.

The mountaineer was the first to speak. "Brother," he said, "if you have fared meagerly to-day, you shall not to-morrow. Catch your best fish, and I'll provide bears' meat, as an accompaniment."

"Bear! what!" exclaimed Maase, "have you seen a bear in the neighborhood?"

Patrick, Regnier, my children, I forbid you to leave this cabin. A bear!"

"Don't be alarmed, sister;" returned Kennybol. "You will have nothing to fear from the bear, after to-morrow. Yes, I did see one, about two miles from Sarb—a white bear, and he was carrying off a man, or some animal; but no; it must have been a goatherd, for they clothe themselves in the skins of beasts. It was too far off, however, for me to see distinctly; but one thing was strange, he carried it on his back, and not in his mouth."

"Is it possible!"

"Yes! and yet whatever it was, it must have been dead, for it made no attempt to escape."

"But," asked the fisherman, "if it was dead, how could it sustain itself upon the bear's back?"

"That is what I can't comprehend myself; but no matter, he'll never carry off anything else. I have engaged six good fellows to accompany me, and to-morrow we shall beat up his quarters; so, sister Maase, you may calculate upon a bear skin as white as the mountain snow, by evening."

"Be careful brother," returned the hostess, "there was something very strange in what you saw. That bear may be a devil."

"Nonsense!" interrupted the mountaineer, laughing. "The devil change himself into a bear? never. He takes the form of an ape, or a cat, sometimes, very often indeed, but a bear never. By St. Eldon, the exorciser, it is enough to make the very children laugh, to see an old woman like you so superstitious."

The poor woman hung down her head in confusion:

"Brother, you were my lord and master, before my venerated husband deigned to cast his eyes upon me. Excuse my folly, and do as your good angel prompts you."

"But whereabouts did you see this bear?" asked the fisherman.

"He seemed to be going from Smiasen in the direction of Walderhog."

"Walderhog!" exclaimed the hostess, making the sign of the cross.

"Walderhog!" repeated Ordoher.

"I trust, brother," said the fisherman, gravely, "that you do not think of going toward the grotto of Walderhog?"

"I?" exclaimed the mountaineer; "Heaven forbid! I said the bear was going in that direction."

"But do you intend to pursue him there to-morrow?" cried Maase, in accents of terror.

"Not I," returned Kennybol; "nor has he gone there. Do you think even a bear would take refuge in a cavern where——"

Here he dropped his voice suddenly, and all three made the sign of the cross.

"You are right," observed the fisherman; "the wild beasts would avoid that place from instinct."

"Pray, my good friends," asked Ordoner. "what is there so frightful in this same cavern of Walderhog?"

The three made no reply, but gazed upon the questioner, as if in stupid amazement at the nature of his inquiry.

"The tomb of King Walder is there, is it not?" continued Ordoner.

"Yes," replied the woman, "a tomb of black stone which sings!"

"Nor is that all!" added the fisherman.

"No," continued his wife, "the bones of the dead dance nightly around the tomb."

"Well! is that all?" inquired Ordoner.

"Young man!" said the fisherman, gravely; "it scarcely becomes you to speak so lightly of things, the very thoughts of which makes an old gray wolf, like me, tremble."

"My friend," replied Ordoner, with a smile, "I am in earnest in wishing to obtain all the information I can in regard to this cavern of Walderhog, for I am going there."

His auditors seemed petrified with terror at this hardy declaration:

"To Walderhog! to Walderhog!" they exclaimed.

"And listen to him!" continued the fisherman; "he tells us so just as coolly as I would say, I'm going to Lævig to sell my codfish, or I'm going to Ralph's bay to catch herring—going to Walderhog! good Heaven!"

"My dear young man!" cried the kind hostess; "have you no good angel, no patron saint to care for you, and protect you from evil? But alas! I recollect you told us you did not know your name."

"What motive," interrupted the mountaineer, "can induce you to think of going there, seignior?"

"I have a demand to make, of one who resides there."

The astonishment and curiosity of his entertainers was redoubled by this reply.

"Listen to me, seignior," said the fisherman at last; "you are a stranger here, and unacquainted with the country, it would appear; your worship is doubtless laboring under some mistake, it cannot be to Walderhog that you have to go."

"Certainly," observed the mountaineer,

"no human being lives there—you would find no one."

"But the demon!" added the hostess.

"What demon?" asked Ordoner.

"Him for whom the tomb sings and the skeletons dance."

"Do you not know," asked the fisherman, approaching the young man and lowering his voice: "do you not know, that the cavern of Walderhog is the dwelling-place of——"

"My husband!" screamed Maase, "do not pronounce that fearful name—it will bring a curse upon us."

"Well, whose dwelling is it?" persisted Ordoner.

"The dwelling of an unclean spirit," answered the woman, with a shudder.

"Of the incarnate Beelzebub," cried Kennybol.

"Really, my good friend," said Ordoner, "I do not comprehend you. I have been told, that it was the residence of Hans of Iceland."

A cry of dismay and terror burst from all in the cabin.

"Well, you know—that is he!—that is the demon," was heard from his auditors.

The woman, taking her cap from her head, called upon all the saints to bear witness, that it was not her who pronounced the dreaded name.

The fisherman, after he had, in a measure, regained his composure, looked gravely at his guest, and said:

"Well, seignior, I did not expect, if I had lived to the age of my father, who numbered one hundred and twenty years, ever to have heard mortal man, in his right senses, say he was going to Walderhog."

"Oh, his worship will not go there, I'm certain," observed Maase, who had partly recovered from her consternation. "It is the same as making a league with the evil one."

"My kind hosts," returned Ordoner, "I must go; and the greatest favor you can do me, is to point out the path by which I shall most speedily reach my journey's end."

"The end you propose, my dear friend," replied the fisherman, "will be most speedily reached, if you spring from the top of the nearest cliff into the torrent which rushes by its base."

"Is the same end, then, to be accomplished," asked Ordoner, mildly, "by uselessly throwing away one's life, as may be, by encountering danger in a good cause?"

Braal shook his head; but the mountaineer began to regard the stranger with a newly awakened interest.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COMBAT

"I see, now," remarked the fisherman, "what your object is. You wish to gain the thousand crowns, that the high syndic has offered for the head of the demon of Iceland."

Ordoner could not avoid smiling.

"Young man," continued his host, with earnest emotion, "renounce this undertaking, I beseech you. I am old and poor; but if I knew I had but one day more to live, I should not sell the poor remains of my life for a thousand crowns."

The kind-hearted woman added her entreaties to those of her husband; and so afflicted did this hospitable pair appear, that Ordoner hastened to answer them, in soothing tones:

"Fear nothing, my friends! I go not for the gold. Other, and more important interests, lead me thither. I go to serve the unfortunate and distressed."

The mountaineer, who had for some time seemed struck by some new idea, here interrupted him:

"I know, now, why you go to meet this Iceland demon. You go to make him fight."

"That is it."

"You are intrusted with an affair of great importance. Is it not so?"

The mountaineer approached Ordoner, with an air of intelligence, and whispered in his ear:

"It is on account of Schumacker, Count Griffenfeldt. Is it not?"

"Brave man! How know you that?" exclaimed Ordoner; who, indeed, was surprised that the object of his journey, which he had confided to no one—not even to General Levin—should be so well known to this rude peasant.

Kennybol again whispered to him:

"I wish you all success. I admire your generosity to the oppressed and unfortunate."

Ordoner's astonishment increased, and he would have further interrogated Kennybol; but he persisted in a low tone:

"Say nothing! I think you may succeed, in your attempt upon the dweller of Walderhog. I, like yourself, am devoted to the service of the prisoner of Monckholm"—then, raising his voice, he said—"brother and sister, for my sake, hold this noble gentleman as a brother. And now, I believe, supper is ready."

"Has his worship, then, renounced his project?" exclaimed Maase.

"Sister, pray that no ill may befall him; for he is good and brave. Come, noble seignior, take food and rest to-night: to-morrow I will be your guide; and we will set out—you in pursuit of the devil, and I of my bear."

THE first rays of the sun were just gilding the summits of the lofty cliffs, which frowned over the gulf of Drontheim, when a fisherman, who had come before the dawn to spread his nets opposite, though at a wary distance from the cavern of Walderhog, observed, descending from the rocks, a figure wrapped in a flowing robe or shroud, which pursued its way with stately step, toward the grotto, and disappeared beneath the gloomy vault which formed its entrance. Struck with terror and amazement, the simple inhabitant of Sarb committed his nets and his bark to the care of St. Usulph, and hastened to tell his wife and neighbors that he had seen one of the spectres that formed the court of the dead king, Walder, return to its mysterious home, at the break of day.

This spectre—the subsequent theme of many a winter's tale—was no other than Ordoner, the generous and lion-hearted son of the viceroy; who, instead of preparing for his joyous nuptials with the premier's daughter, as his countrymen so generally supposed, was hastening to encounter a mortal peril for the sake of another, and to sacrifice his life, if need should be, in the cause of the prisoner's child, of Monckholm.

Sad presages, evil omens, and sinister predictions, had thus far accompanied him on his undertaking; all whom he had met upon his dreary path, had seemed to look upon him as one doomed to destruction. The friendly fisherman, who had afforded him shelter on the previous night, had taken leave of him, as of one whose face he should see no more; his kind-hearted wife, while she commended him to the protection of the saints, showed, by her looks, that her faith in his return was weak. The bold mountaineer, with his fellows, used as they were to dangers of no common magnitude, stopped when they came in sight of the dreaded cave, shuddered, as they pointed out the direction, and when they beheld him depart, entreated him, for the last time, to forbear his desperate adventure.

But, vain were the terrors of superstition—fruitless the entreaties of friends; Ordoner viewed this abode of mystery and horror, as the sea-tossed mariner does his long wished-for haven. Here his tedious wanderings were to cease—here the great deed of daring, to which his brave heart had aspired, was to be done—here the chain of the prisoner was to be broken—here the

hand of her he loved was to be won, or at the worst, here he was to seal his devotion to his Ethel, with the last drop of blood that coursed through his veins. He was to encounter a brigand, a monster, or, as some believed, a demon: but no frightful image of his terrible antagonist filled his imagination: on the contrary, in mental vision, he saw the sweet girl for whom he periled all, the captive maiden of Monckholm, upon her knees in her oratory, praying for his success; and his whole soul was filled with confidence and courage, as he penetrated, with fearless step, the recesses of the cavern.

On every side were scattered and grouped about, columns of basalt, huge stalagmites, and large masses of quartz and pyrites, while from above, hung long stalactites, with festoons of moss and lichen, the whole forming a scene, which, lighted as it was, through the crevices in the rock, afforded ample range for the superstition of the Norwegian peasantry, which had peopled this picturesque abode with whole hosts of demons and spectres dire. Slight was the notice, however, which Ordener bestowed upon the grotesque objects which surrounded him; even the black tomb of King Walder failed to attract his attention; it raised no song of welcome or warning at his coming, and the only sound which fell upon his ear, was the breath of the wind, as it moaned and sighed along the gloomy passages, which branched in every direction from the main path in which he was treading, while his eyes were busied with searching every recess for the mysterious being whom he had come so far to meet. No living form met his sight; but, as he increased his distance from the entrance, he became aware that he was passing over the remains of the dead; for at shorter and shorter intervals, the bones crushed and crackled beneath his feet; polished skulls slid from the path, and white teeth, whenever the light shone sufficiently strong, were seen scattered among the rocks, like pebbles upon the shore of the sea.

Undismayed by the presence of these frightful emblems of mortality, the only emotion Ordener experienced was disappointment at the absence of the living object of his search; and this was increased when his path conducted him to a large apartment, through the fissures in the farther side of which he perceived the forest and the mountains beyond. Satisfied that he had now explored the cavern to its full extent, he commenced an examination of the sort of hall in which it terminated; which proving unsuccessful, so far as the

discovery of his enemy was concerned, he began seriously to apprehend that he had been deceived. In the centre of the open space in which he now stood, was one of those druidical erections, which Ordener had often met with in his travels in the north of Europe, and of which even France possesses some specimens, at Jarnac and Lokmariaker;—it was an altar. The nature of its construction was simple; and to the great weight and solidity of its material, its preservation, from the earliest ages, was doubtless owing. Three huge blocks of granite, placed in triangular order, were surmounted by a fourth, of corresponding form, and of the same imperishable substance; upon this foundation was placed a cubical altar-stone, in the upper surface of which was excavated a circular bowl, still black with the blood of human victims, which, in times of old, had been sacrificed to the demon gods of the north.

Against this ancient relic of the early superstitions of his country, now reclined the gallant descendant of her godlike kings, musing upon the ill success which had attended his chivalrous undertaking, and pondering what course remained to be pursued.

Suddenly, a voice coming, as it seemed, from the very heart of the altar-stone, struck harshly upon his ear.

"Young man," it said, "your feet already rest upon your sepulchre!"

Ordener sprang up, placed his hand upon his sword, and looked eagerly around; nothing was to be seen, and the sound of the voice gradually died away in feeble echoes through the gloomy recesses of the cavern.

In a moment after, a hideous head made its appearance above the altar-stone; and the same voice repeated, in tones which resembled the smothered growl of the lion:

"Young man, your feet are resting on your sepulchre!"

"And my hand upon my sword!" replied Ordener, with an air of haughty defiance.

In an instant, his enemy emerged from his concealment and stood before him; his garments and hands were stained with blood; his naked and swarthy limbs gave token of prodigious strength; his eyes gleamed like living coals; he leaned upon his dreadful axe, which was still clotted with gore, and in a voice which resembled the sharp and angry snarl of a wild beast, exclaimed:

"I am here!"

"And I!" returned Ordener.

"I have waited for you!"

"I have done more: I sought you!" replied the intrepid young noble.

The other folded his arms, and gazing fixedly on his antagonist, asked :

"Do you know me?"

"Yes!"

"And are you not afraid?"

"Not now!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the monster; "you were then!"

"Yes; afraid I should not find you!"

"Dare you brave me while your feet are even now trampling on the carcasses of my victims?"

"I mean to trample upon your own ere long!"

The countenance of Hans grew black as midnight with rage.

"Beware!" he cried; "when I fall on you, I shall grind you to powder!"

Orderer, calm and self-possessed, returned the threat of his antagonist with an air of haughty defiance.

"Fall on," he replied, "and you yourself shall be broken!"

The two opponents glanced fiercely upon each other for a moment, in silence. It seemed as if the fearless eye of the mortal had almost quelled the fiendish stare of the demon, for he moved not, though in attitude to spring, and working his claws like a tiger, before he bounds upon his prey.

"Weak mortal!" Hans exclaimed, at last, "you almost move me to pity."

"Brute!" replied Orderer; "you move me only to contempt."

"Boy!" rejoined his adversary; "your skin is fair, your voice is soft, like that of a girl. Say, what death will you have at my hand?"

"Your own!"

Hans laughed. "Fool!" he replied; "know you not that I am a demon, and that my mortal frame is inhabited by the spirit of Ingolphe, the exterminator?"

"I know that you are a felon, and that you shed blood for gold!"

"You are mistaken: I shed blood for the love of it."

"Were you not hired by the Count d'Ahlefeldt, to murder Captain Dispolzen?"

"What are you talking of, and who?"

"Did you not assassinate Captain Dispolzen, at the landing-place of Urchtal?"

"Possibly; but I had forgotten him, as I shall you, in three days' time."

"And have you forgotten the Count d'Ahlefeldt, who paid you for robbing the captain of a steel casket?"

"D'Ahlefeldt! ah, I recollect. It was but yesterday I drank his son's blood, out of my son's skull!"

Orderer shuddered with horror and dis-

gust. "Were you not satisfied with your pay, then?" he demanded.

"What pay?"

"Enough of this!" replied Orderer; "answer me distinctly, for I'm tired of bandying words with you. Did you, or did you not, take a steel casket from the body of an officer of the regiment of Monckholm, whom you murdered, a week or more since?"

At the name of Monckholm, the brigand shook with rage.

"Perhaps you belong to the regiment of Monckholm," he muttered, in a low tone.

"No!" returned Orderer; "but answer me."

"So much the worse!" said the brigand.

"But, you have not answered me. Where is the casket you took from the body of Captain Dispolzen?"

The other mused for a moment, and then replied:

"By the spirit of Ingolphe! here is a coil about a trifling box of steel. Boy, I tell you, there will never be half the inquiry made for the box that holds your bones, if you should chance to be favored with one, which is not probable."

From the tenor of his answer, Orderer was led to infer that his adversary had some knowledge of the casket, and that he might yet recover possession of it.

"Tell me," he continued; "is that casket in the power of Count d'Ahlefeldt?"

"No!"

"You sneer—and now I know you lie!"

"Believe what you please; what is it to me?"

Orderer was exasperated at the air of mockery which his antagonist assumed, and despairing of intimidating him, he determined to bring his controversy to an issue as speedily as possible.

"I must have that casket!" he exclaimed, sternly.

A truculent sneer was his only answer.

"Once more," he repeated in a louder tone; "will you give it me?"

"Will you give your orders to the wild beasts of the forest, or to the monsters of the deep?"

"Yes! or to all the devils in hell, and I will be obeyed."

"That, you shall have an opportunity of trying within the hour."

Orderer drew his sword. "Will you surrender the casket?" he demanded sternly.

"'Tis time to finish this!" roared his opponent, raising his axe. "I had only to break your bones, and suck your blood, an hour since; and I would have done so, but

that I had some curiosity to see the falcon swoop down upon the eagle."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Ordoner; "defend yourself."

"You are the first that ever bade me do so;" replied Hans, grinding his teeth. He then threw off his upper garment, and raising his axe, stood upon the altar, like one of the demons to whose worship it had first been dedicated, ready to spring upon his victim.

Ordoner did not wait for his assault, but bearing his point directly at his face, precipitated himself upon his foe.

To wonderful strength and agility, Ordoner added an almost unexampled skill in the use of his weapon. The impetuosity of his attack was tempered by coolness and self-possession. His quick eye caught every movement of his adversary; his rapid evolutions saved him from the deadly sweep of the fatal axe, and enabled him, in return, to send back blow and thrust, with a vigor and nearness of approach, which taught the monster that he had no common foe before him; but vain were his attempts to wound or disarm his opponent. Hans, on the contrary, unaccustomed to experience even a momentary opposition, was excited to a degree of madness, which, for the time, proved the safeguard of his antagonist. His blows fell like hail, and with a superhuman force, which no armor could have withstood, and no skill could have parried. Unlike him, Ordoner, instead of throwing off his mantle, had wound it partially around his arm, and waving it in the air, diverted the aim of the formidable weapon which threatened him, and finally succeeded in entangling the blade in its heavy folds. Following up his advantage, with the quickness of lightning, he wound the garment more tightly about the axe, in despite of the monster's every effort to disengage it, and bore his point directly against the throat of his antagonist.

"Now will you give me up the casket?" he cried, forgetting even his own peril, in his anxiety to obtain the all-important proof of Schumacker's innocence.

Hans regarded him for a moment in surprise, but undismayed.

"No, curse you!" he replied.

"Then disengage your axe and let us renew the contest," said the gallant Ordoner: "I want no advantage over you."

"Fool!" replied the monster, "I want none of your generosity;" and dropping his hold of the weapon, he precipitated himself upon Ordoner, wrapping him in his sinewy arms, and sinking his iron talons into his flesh.

Staggered by the force and suddenness of the shock—added to the weight of his antagonist—the brave young noble had nearly fallen to the ground; but he recovered, and bracing himself against the altar, he grasped the blade of his sword by the middle, and pressed it firmly against the monster's back. Stung by the pain, Hans, by a violent effort, extricated himself from his dangerous position before the steel had penetrated far, and sprung some paces backward, bearing in his teeth a portion of the green mantle, dripping with the blood of his foe.

And now, the combat was renewed, for a third time, in a new and still more desperate manner. About the spot where Hans had alighted, were scattered huge masses of rock, of a size and weight, which no two living men besides could have lifted from the ground; raising them with superhuman strength, he hurled them at Ordoner in quick succession, with a degree of force and precision, which not only kept him at a distance, but exercised all his agility in avoiding the contact of these tremendous missiles. Determined, however, to finish his task, or perish in the attempt, the young man at last dashed forward. He succeeded in avoiding the ponderous mass which Hans had just launched at him; but it encountered the blade of his sabre, and shivered it to the hilt. At the same moment Hans threw himself upon his axe, which he waved on high, and exclaimed:

"Now have you aught to say to God or devil, before you perish?"

Ordoner was disarmed. He gave one thought to Ethel—breathed one prayer—and hopeless, though undismayed, awaited the attack of his ferocious antagonist.

At this moment, a clamor from without made the gloomy vault resound. It was the wailing cry of a bear at bay, mingled with the shouts of men, and the discharge of musketry. Hans hesitated a moment; but fearing he should be too late to save the only living thing he cared for, and confident that Ordoner could not escape, he sprang through one of the fissures of the rock, with a terrible cry, and rushed to the rescue of his servant and companion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MARCH OF THE ARQUEBUSIERS OF MONCKHOLM.

THE regiment of Monckholm was on its route from Drontheim to Skongen. Sometimes, it wound along the dry bed of a mountain torrent; and then as the rays of

the sun fell on the glittering file of bayonets, it resembled a serpent with glistening scales of green and gold. Then again it climbed the road which encircled some lofty peak, and its array, diminished by the distance, might be likened to the mimic host which winds in spiral curves about some triumphal column of bronze.

With weary step and discontented mien, the soldiers marched sullenly—for regular troops are seldom pleased with anything but combat or repose. Besides, the road was rough, and the weather raw and chilly. The officers also, accustomed to the amusement and dissipation of a garrison-life, betrayed, already, symptoms of ennui and fatigue.

To while away the time, Lieutenant Randmer, a young Danish baron, had joined Captain Lory, an old soldier of fortune; who, with martial tread, and head erect, though with a sad and gloomy brow, led on his company.

"What's the matter, captain?" began the subaltern; "you look unhappy."

"And if I do," returned the senior, "I have good cause."

"Come, come; there's no good cause for being down-hearted. Look at me! I'm not sad; though I bet I've quite as much cause as you."

"I doubt it, baron. I've lost all I valued in the world."

"My case exactly, captain! 'Tis just five days since Lieutenant Alberic won of me my castle and estate of Randmer, but you don't see me the less gay on that account."

The captain replied in a mournful tone of voice:

"You have lost your fine castle, baron, but you will win it back, or another as good. I have lost my dog."

"Well, and you can get another dog."

"I can get another dog, 'tis true, but it will not be my poor Drake. Yes," continued the old man, with a deep sigh, "he was all I had to love; I never cared as much for father nor mother, God rest their souls. Lieutenant Randmer, he saved my life in the Pomeranian war. I called him Drake, in honor of the great admiral. Oh, my poor dog! my fortune has often failed me, but he never! I recollect, that after the battle of Chalpiu, General Schack patted him on the head, and said to me: 'You have a fierce dog. Sergeant Lory,'—for I was only a sergeant then——"

"Ah!" interrupted the baron, cutting the air with his switch: "how queer it must seem to be a sergeant!"

The veteran paid no attention to his com-

panion's remark, but went on muttering to himself:

"Poor, poor Drake! After escaping the perils of so many a deadly breach and trench, to be drowned at last, like a blind kitten, in that cursed gulf of Drontheim! Oh! my dog! my friend! you should have died on the battle-field with your master!"

"Come, captain," cried the lieutenant, "cheer up. We shall meet the enemy to-morrow."

"The enemy!" repeated the veteran, contemptuously; "a pretty enemy, indeed!"

"How! Do you think these brigands of miners, and devils of mountaineers, are an enemy to be despised?"

"Stone-cutters, and footpads; wretches who are ignorant of the first rudiments of the art of war. A worthy enemy truly, to oppose soldiers like me, who have served in the wars of Holstein and Pomerania, and gone through all the campaigns of Scania and Dalcarlia: fought under the glorious General Schack, and the valiant Count Guldenlew."

"But, captain," interrupted the baron, "have you not heard that the rebels are commanded by a formidable chief—a giant—a sort of wood demon, who drinks human blood, and is either an incarnation of the fiend himself, or in close communication with him?"

"No: who are you speaking of?"

"The famous Hans of Iceland!"

"Pshaw! I'll wager now, that he cannot carry his men through the latest musket drill, or teach them the imperial carbine exercise."

Randmer could not restrain his laughter.

"Oh, you may laugh," continued the veteran; "I doubt not you will find it excellent fun to cross sabres with spits, and charge pikes and bayonets against dung-forks; but for me, I scorn such enemies—my poor Drake, even, would not have condescended to snap at their heels."

While the captain was thus giving vent to his sorrow and indignation, and Randmer sustaining his part of the conversation by laughter and jesting, they were interrupted by the arrival of another officer, who seemed to be hurrying back from the head of the column, almost breathless, to impart some startling news.

"Captain Lory!" he exclaimed. "my dear Randmer!"

"Well, what's the matter now?" answered both at once.

"My friends, I am so horror-struck, I can hardly tell you. D'Ahlefeldt, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeldt, the son of the chancel-

lor—you know him, Randmer—such a gay fashionable fellow——”

“Yes, interrupted the baron; “fashionable enough; but my costume, at the last masque in Copenhagen, was considered much more fashionable than his.”

“I know who you mean,” observed Lory, speaking at the same time; “he was lieutenant of the third flank company, and very negligent of his duty; he was too——”

“Well,” replied the new-comer, “there will be no cause to complain of him hereafter——”

“How?” demanded Randmer.

“He is in garrison at Wahlstrom,” continued Captain Lory.

“He was,” replied the other; “but a message has just come from the colonel—poor Frederic!——”

“But what is the matter, Captain Bollar?” inquired Randmer. “You alarm me.”

“Fudge!” exclaimed Lory. “The fashionable lieutenant has been guilty of some gross negligence of duty, and his captain has put him under arrest, and reported him to head-quarters; and because he happens to be the grand-chancellor’s son, there is a dreadful rout about it.”

“Captain Lory,” cried Bollar, placing his hand upon his shoulder and looking him directly in the face, “Lieutenant d’Ahlefeldt has been eaten alive!”

Randmer, who had previously been somewhat startled, now burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

“Bollar,” said he, “you are always running your riggs, but you don’t catch me with such a preposterous tale as that. But look at Lory. One would think, from his serious air, that he really believed you. Oh, that is too good—our delicate thin-skinned Frederic eaten up alive. What a tender morsel he must have made!”

“Randmer,” returned Bollar, “you are a fool! D’Ahlefeldt is dead! I have it from the colonel himself.”

“How well he carries it on!” cried Randmer, with a fresh burst of merriment.

Bollar shrugged his shoulders and turned to reply to Lory, who, with an air of great indifference, had asked him how it came about.

“Yes,” added Randmer. “my good fellow, tell us all about it—how was the poor devil sauced up—as a breakfast for a wolf, a dinner for a mammoth, or a supper for a bear?”

“The colonel,” said Bollar, “has received dispatches to the effect, that the garrison of Wahlstrom has retired before the rebels, and is on its march to join us.”

Lory frowned.

“It is also added, that Lieutenant Frederic d’Ahlefeldt, having gone into the mountains some three days since, was seized by a monster, borne into his cave at the ruins of Arbar, and devoured alive!”

Here Randmer’s mirth broke forth afresh.

“How Lory stares at your raw-head-and-bloody-bones stories, Bollar!” he cried; “keep your countenance, and he is sure to believe you. Oh, you are a capital actor; but come, you have not told us what sort of a monster, or ogre, or vampire this is, that eats up a lieutenant of infantry, as he would a kid of six days old.”

“I’ll not tell *you*, but I will tell Lory, who is not such an incredulous fool. Lory, the monster who has committed this horrible atrocity, is said to be Hans of Iceland; he drank the blood of the unfortunate Frederic!”

“Ah, the colonel of the brigands!” said the veteran.

“Now, my brave boys,” said Randmer, in tones of raillery, “what do you think of that? What need has such an officer, of the imperial carbine exercise?”

“Baron Randmer,” remarked Bollar, seriously, “you resemble d’Ahlefeldt much in character; take care *your fate* be not the same.”

“Well, I do protest, I never saw anything like the imperturbable gravity with which you have told that tale.”

“And I never saw anything like the ill-timed gayety with which you have listened to it.”

At that moment a group of officers, in deep conversation, approached our two.

“Pardieu!” exclaimed Randmer; “I must amuse these fellows with Bollar’s new romance. Comrades,” he cried, with a laugh, “did you know that poor Frederic d’Ahlefeldt has been eaten raw by the monster, Hans of Iceland?”

To his great surprise the remark was received with anything but merriment; his brother officers replied with gravity, and even sternness:

“Does that afford you much amusement, Randmer? I am surprised. Is it a laughing matter?” were the answers he got from the approaching group.

“But,” he exclaimed, “you don’t mean to say that it is really true?”

“Certainly: you know it is; did you not say so yourself, just now?”

“But I thought it only a joke of Bollar’s!”

“A very foolish joke it would have been,” observed an old officer; “but, unhappily, it is too true—our colonel, Baron Vauthæn, has received certain intelligence.”

"Oh, it is frightful! horrible!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"We have got to fight cannibals, half man and half beast!" observed one.

"And we are to be shot down from behind the rocks and trees, and then gathered up and eaten like pheasants!" said another.

"The death of d'Ahlefeldt fairly makes me shudder!" remarked Bollar, in a solemn tone. "Our regiment seems to be fated;—first, there was the mysterious murder of Dispolsen; then, the massacre of those unhappy soldiers at Cascathymore; and now, this awful disaster which has befallen d'Ahlefeldt; and all three of these events within so short a time."

Baron Randmer, who, for the first five minutes, had been lost in sombre revery, now recovered himself, and sighed:

"Alas! poor Frederic! it seems incredible. What a dancer he was!"

Lory, who seemed deeply affected by the loss, either of the lieutenant or of his dog, marched on in solemn silence, which he only broke to remind the second arquebusier, Toric Belfast, that the brass of his bandoliers had been imperfectly polished that morning.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RENDEZVOUS OF THE MINERS, AND THE SPY.

It will be recollected that we left Ordoner in the cavern of the Walderhog, reprieved, as it seemed, from instant death, by the departure of Hans, who flew to the rescue of his only friend. Upon the appearance of the monster at the outside of the cave, the assailants, overcome at once by superstitious fears, betook themselves to flight. It was the common belief throughout those regions which he desolated, that Hans was invulnerable by ball or steel; but whether this were or were not the case, none were found hardy enough to encounter him with pike or gun; and all were glad to seek safety in flight, rather than to abide and test the supernatural powers with which he was supposed to be gifted. Doubtless, in his nature and internal structure, he did resemble the ferocious animal which was his only associate, assimilating as he did to it in his habits and mode of life; and it is well known that the polar bear possesses a tenacity of existence which enables it to sustain injuries and wounds, which would prove fatal to almost any other animal living. The bear, in this instance, had not escaped unhurt; and if

left unsuccored would have been destroyed by his assailants; but no sooner did he see his master by his side, than he rushed again impetuously upon his foes. Hans followed, carried away by the love of slaughter and revenge; while Ordoner was left behind, for the moment, forgotten by his demon antagonist.

The young man's first emotion, was gratitude for his escape; but a moment brought reflection, and with it the recollection, that his undertaking was not accomplished, and that his efforts, in behalf of Ethel and her father, had been vain. His resolution was taken at once; after a hasty, but unavailing search for the missing casket; he armed himself with a heavy club, the only weapon which chance threw in his way, and sprang through the fissure of the rock, and pursued the demon, determined that he would still conquer him or perish.

Happily for our adventurer, his pursuit was vain; the rapid flight of the hunters had already drawn his late antagonist to a considerable distance, and Ordoner, ignorant of the paths, and imperfectly guided by the distant noise of the chase and conflict, soon became bewildered in the thick-
et, which surrounded the cavern. Still he pushed on, in the direction where he supposed Hans had gone, but he only wandered farther from the track, and at mid-day he found himself, weary and wounded, in the heart of the forest, which hid every landmark from his view. Assuaging his hunger and thirst as best he could, with the wild fruit and berries which grew around, after resting for an hour or two, under a tree, he renewed his attempts to extricate himself from the labyrinth in which he was involved; but it was not until evening, that he found himself upon the borders of a lake, which he did not recollect ever having seen before. After taking a long draught from its waters, he wrapped his mantle about him, and reclining upon the bank, endeavored to compose himself to sleep.

His efforts were in vain; the thought of Ethel and her father unredeemed—the recollection of his futile attempt, the mortification of his defeat, all rushed upon his mind, and banished his repose. He had lain thus wakeful, for an hour or more, brooding over his troubles, and endeavoring to form new plans for the morrow, when his attention was suddenly attracted by the confused sound of voices in the distance; and raising himself upon his elbow, he perceived approaching a group of figures, the distinctive character of which

he could not make out, by the dim light which an overclouded sky afforded. When they had approached within a hundred yards of Ordoner, they paused; a sudden light shone out from among them, and one by one he perceived them sink into the earth, until all had disappeared.

Ordoner, as we have seen, was far above the common superstitions of the day; but the sight which he had seen, the night, and the solitude of his situation, were not without their effect upon his mind. Whether the dead do rise and walk the earth, has long been and still is a matter in dispute, even between the wisest. His eyes had shown him something, which his reason pronounced unnatural; and, before he approached the mysterious spot, he crossed himself, and breathed a prayer to Heaven.

After proceeding a sufficient distance, in the direction where he saw the mysterious appearance, he came suddenly upon the mouth of a well, from the depths of which ascended a light, and the confused sound of voices. His dread of the supernatural vanished at once; but in its stead arose a host of questions, difficult of solution. "This was doubtless the mouth of some mine, or subterranean cave; but who were its inmates! and for what purpose had they met? Should he, or should he not, descend and join them? They were doubtless brigands, and in numbers: he was unarmed, and alone; but then the necessity of finding some direction out of the forest, the possibility that he might procure arms and a guide, to enable him to finish the adventure to which he had devoted himself: the dread of further delay—these last considerations, decided him; he looked about for means to descend, and speedily found a rope-ladder, secured at the top to a neighboring rock, which descended into the depths of the abyss. Without a moment's hesitation, Ordoner committed himself to this hanging stairway, and moving as quickly and with as little noise as possible, soon reached a depth where the light became brighter, and the sound of voices more distinct. He then perceived that he was just above the opening, which connected the bottom of the well with some subterranean apartment, and here he thought it best to pause for a moment, until he should be able, from the tenor of the conversation which was going on beneath, to form some opinion of the character and pursuits of the company, into which he was about to intrude himself.

The first words which struck his ear were the following:

"Kennybol not arrived yet! Where can he be?"

"I cannot say, Seignior Hacket," replied another voice.

"He was to have passed the night at his sister's, Maase Braal's, in the hamlet of Sarb," said another.

"Well," observed the first speaker, "you see that I keep my engagements punctually. I promised to bring you Hans of Iceland to lead you to battle; and I have brought him."

A confused murmur, indicating a painful emotion, which it would be hard to describe, answered this declaration. Ordoner, whose curiosity had been excited by the mention of Kennybol, became doubly interested, when he heard the name of Hans.

"My friends," continued the first speaker, "Norbith and Jonas, it does not matter much if Kennybol is behind-hand. We are strong enough ourselves without him. Did you find the banners, in the ruins of Craig, as I told you?"

"Yes, Seignior Hacket," was the answer from many voices.

"Well, then, raise the standard! The time is come. The money is here; and so is your invincible chief—ready to lead you. Courage! and march to the deliverance of the noble Schumacker, the much-wronged Count of Griffenfeldt."

"Long live Schumacker! Long live Schumacker!" resounded through the vaults from a thousand voices.

Ordoner was astounded. This strange jumble of the names of Kennybol, of Schumacker, and of Hans of Iceland was inexplicable to him.

"Listen to me," continued the voice of the person whom the others addressed as Seignior Hacket, and which Ordoner did not recollect ever hearing before. "Listen to the confidant of the noble Count Griffenfeldt. Place your reliance upon me, as he does his own. I assure you that all chances are in your favor. You will reach Drontheim without encountering an enemy."

"Seignior," cried a voice, "Peters informed me, that the whole regiment of Monckholm was already marching through the defiles to attack us."

"He is mistaken. The government is, as yet, ignorant of the revolt; and so blinded is it, that your most deadly and powerful enemy, he who rejects all your petitions and keeps your unfortunate friend, the good Count Schumacker, in cruel bondage, has been recalled from Drontheim, to assist in the celebration of the marriage of Ordoner Guldenlew to Ulrica

d'Ahlefeldt. Your enemy, General Levin de Knud, is no longer at Drontheim to oppose you."

Ordoner's emotion can better be imagined than described.

"Yes," continued the speaker, "the invincible Hans of Iceland will command you. With such a leader, what have you to fear? You fight for your mines, your children, and your sacred rights! You have justice and power upon your side! You must conquer! Let your watchword be 'Schumacker and liberty! death to the tyrants!'"

"Death to the tyrants! Schumacker and liberty!" repeated a thousand voices, while the deafening shout was accompanied by the clang of arms.

"Pause!" cried Ordoner, as he descended rapidly the remaining rounds of the ladder, and stood before the assembled multitude.

The hope of saving Schumacker from the commission of a crime like this, and of preventing the bloodshed and pillage with which he now saw that his country was threatened, had overcome every other consideration, and impelled our hero to the adventurous course he had taken. But when he reflected that he was alone and unknown, and found himself at once in the presence of hundreds, who were already embarked in an undertaking which he had so feeble means to oppose, he hesitated, for a moment, in what manner to address them, and that hesitation had well-nigh proved fatal to him.

The place before him was more like some subterranean city, than anything which could be denominated an apartment or a hall. Its limits were lost in the distance, the lofty and vaulted roof was supported by glittering columns of fell-spar; the top of which could not be discerned. Numerous lights were scattered about, both far and near. The area and the long arcades, as far as the eye could reach, were filled with savage-looking men; whose gleaming arms showed that it was for no peaceful purpose that they had assembled. Before Ordoner could arrange his thoughts sufficiently to address them, a cry arose, led by the *soi-disant* confidant of Schumacker, which would have drowned his voice, had he possessed the lungs of Stentor:

"A stranger! A spy! Kill him! kill him!"

A hundred arms were raised at once; a hundred weapons gleamed in the air. Ordoner placed his back against the wall, and put his hand to where his sword should have been, but it was gone; nor could a

hundred swords, nor as many hands to wield them, have delayed his fate.

He who had raised the storm, saw fit again to lull it for the moment. The Seignior Hacket approached Ordoner, and said to those about him:

"Forbear, until I have questioned him!"

This personage was short of stature, and inclining to be fat; his face would have been agreeable, but for a treacherous and sinister expression about the eye. His attire was civil, rather than military; his manner was mild, and he commenced his examination by asking Ordoner,

"Who are you?"

The young noble, glancing around at the weapons which threatened from every quarter, made no reply.

"Why do you not answer? are you afraid?"

"Not so much as you are."

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed the little man; "you brave us, do you? Well, die then!" and he turned on his heel.

"Death is all I would take from such as you."

"Stop a moment, Seignior Hacket!" exclaimed an old man, with a long white beard: "this is my domain; and it is my privilege to send this visitor to relate his experience to the dead."

"Oh! as you please, my good Jonas!" was the reply. "What matters it to me, who condemns the spy, so that he dies the death?"

The old man turned toward Ordoner, and said:

"Come! you, whose curiosity to know who we are, has cost you so dear, tell us who you are yourself!"

Ordoner preserved his silence. He was surrounded by these strange partizans of Schumacker, a man for whom he would willingly have shed his blood; but whom he was now forced to think unfaithful, and who had, by his own misdeeds, brought down inevitable destruction upon his own head, and ruin upon his daughter. Life had no longer any charms for Ordoner.

"So, your worship will not answer *me*?" resumed the old man. "When the fox is taken, he never cries, 'Kill him!'"

"My brave Jonas!" exclaimed Hacket; "let his death be the first exploit of Hans of Iceland!"

"Agreed! agreed!" shouted the multitude.

Ordoner surprised, but still calm and self-possessed, looked quietly about him, to see if he could discover the extraordinary being whom he had encountered in the morning; and his surprise was redoubled,

when he saw approaching him a man of colossal stature, clad in the costume of a mountaineer. The giant scowled upon Ordoner, with an atrocious, but stupid look, and asked for an axe.

"You are not Hans of Iceland," exclaimed Ordoner, contemptuously.

"Kill him! kill him!" cried Hacket, in furious haste.

Ordoner perceived that his last hour had come. He put his hand in his bosom and drew forth the lock of hair which Ethel had given him at parting, that he might give it one last sad kiss. In so doing, a dagger fell from his girdle.

"Seize that paper, Norbith, quick; see what it is," cried Hacket.

The giant was already in attitude to strike, but delayed a moment. The young leader examined the paper.

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Norbith; "it is the pass of my poor dear friend, Christophorus Nedlum, who was executed for coining, some days since, at Skongen."

"Ah, is that all!" said Hacket. "I thought it had been something more important. Come, Hans, my good fellow, dispatch."

But Norbith had already thrown himself before Ordoner.

"He is under my protection!" he cried; "you shall have my life before you hurt a hair of his head. I will not suffer the passport of Christophorus Nedlum to be violated."

Ordoner so miraculously preserved, could not avoid calling to mind the parting prayer of the good Athanasius Munder, "May the gift of the dying be of service to you, traveller."

"Bah! bah!" said Hacket; "you talk nonsense, my dear Norbith; the man is a spy, and he must suffer death!"

"Give me the axe again!" cried the giant.

"He shall not die!" replied Norbith. "What would the spirit of my poor Nedlum think if his pass were violated? He shall not die, for Nedlum did not wish him to die."

"Norbith is right," chimed in old Jonas. "How can you think of killing this man, Seignior Hacket, when he has the pass of Christophorus Nedlum?"

"He is a spy! he is a spy!" repeated Hacket, furiously.

The two chiefs of the miners placed themselves before the prisoner, and gravely replied:

"But he has the pass of Christophorus Nedlum, who was hung at Skongen."

Hacket perceived that he must yield, for

the crowd began to murmur, and everywhere was repeated the magic words, "He has the pass of Christophorus Nedlum—he must not and shall not die!"

"Well, let him live, then," growled the disappointed conspirator, "and see what comes of it."

"Oh, if he was the devil, he should not be killed!" returned Norbith, doggedly; then turning to Ordoner, he continued, "you ought to be faithful and true, as you have my poor Nedlum's pass. Now listen to me: we are the royal miners—we are in a state of revolt to rid ourselves of the burthens which are laid upon us. Seignior Hacket there, says that we are in arms for Count Schumacker. I know nothing about him, but I know that our cause is just. Now, will you join us?"

A sudden thought passed through Ordoner's mind.

"I will," said he.

Norbith presented him a sabre, which he received in silence.

"Brother," said the young chief, "if you would betray us, let your first blow be struck at me."

At this moment the sound of a mountain horn was heard, and voices from above announced the arrival of Kennybol.

CHAPTER XXX.

ORDONER AMONG THE REBELS.

THE human mind is sometimes illuminated by a sudden flash of inspiration, which in a single moment, performs the work of whole days of deliberate reflection; something of this kind it was, which impelled the son of the viceroy to accede to the proposal of Norbith and join the revolt against his father and his sovereign. What he proposed to himself, by this measure, he might, if suddenly called upon, have found it difficult to have explained, so many different objects were mingled in his undertaking. An indefinite idea, that by so doing, he should best be able to save Ethel and her father, was, perhaps, first and foremost in his mind; then the desire of solving this inextricable plot, which threatened such ills to his native country; the possibility, that an opportunity might occur, which would enable him to arrest them, and to save the misguided men about him from the consequences of this rebellion; a desire to ascertain how far Schumacker was really involved in the treason, together with a certain recklessness, the result of an apprehension that an insuperable barrier had been raised between him and the one

most dear to his heart, all conspired to induce him to take a step so extraordinary as the one we have described.

Upon the arrival of Kennybol, Hacket left Ordoner with his new protectors, and hurried to meet the hunter.

"Are you here at last, my dear Kennybol?" he exclaimed. "Come, let me present you to our new commander, Hans of Iceland."

At this name, Kennybol, who had arrived pale, breathless, and disfigured with blood and dirt, started back in dismay.

"Hans of Iceland!" he cried.

"Yes!" replied Hacket; "but compose yourself. He is here to aid us; we must learn to regard him as a friend and companion."

Kennybol did not seem to understand him, and only repeated,

"Is Hans of Iceland here?"

Hacket turned to the bystanders with a sneer.

"Why, our brave Kennybol is frightened out of his senses!" he said, "and the fear of Hans of Iceland has kept him away until this time."

Kennybol raised his hands to heaven:

"Now, by Ethelvera, the martyr of Norway, I swear that it was not the fear of Hans of Iceland, but Hans of Iceland himself, that kept me from the rendezvous till now!"

Amazement sat upon every brow; a murmur ran through the crowd, and the countenance of Hacket became overcast with an air of embarrassment and vexation; he took Kennybol aside, and addressed him in a low tone:

"What do you mean by all this?" he inquired.

"I mean," replied Kennybol, "that if it had not been for your cursed Hans of Iceland, I should have been here long ago!"

"Really? Explain yourself."

"Oh, don't ask me; I only hope every hair on my head may turn white, if ever I meddle with a white bear again!"

"What! you had like to have been devoured by a bear, then; is that what has scared you?"

Kennybol shrugged his shoulders with contempt.

"I scared by a bear? You know but little of me, Seignior Hacket, or you would not say that; and if you knew what really had scared me, you would not say that Hans of Iceland was here."

Hacket grew more and more disconcerted by Kennybol's obstinacy. He now conducted him to a part of the mines where they could not, by any possibility be heard,

and insisted upon knowing what the occurrence was to which he so mysteriously alluded.

After much entreaty, and with great reluctance, Kennybol related the adventures of the day.

He said that he had set out early in the morning, with six comrades, to hunt a white bear which he had seen the day previous, in the direction of Walderhog; that at some distance from the cavern they had started their game, which, in the ardor of the chase they had subsequently pursued to the immediate vicinity of the haunted cave; that, while the bear was at bay, there suddenly appeared, from a fissure in a rock, a strange being—whether human or brute, monster or devil, they could not divine—armed with an axe, who came to the assistance of the bear. Terrified by this apparition,—which they knew must be either Hans or the devil himself—they took to flight; they were pursued, and one by one, his comrades were overtaken and destroyed; he himself owed his escape to his great agility and powers of endurance alone, for the monster had followed him nearly all the day, and gained upon him constantly, except when he stopped to devour the carcasses of the slain. "So that you see, seignior," concluded the hunter, "it cannot be possible that the demon whom I left not long since, supping upon my poor companions, should now be here in this mine."

The conclusion seemed, indeed, irresistible, but Hacket was not easily disconcerted, and was never at a loss for expedients.

"My brave friend," he said to Kennybol, in a grave tone of voice, "I knew all this before."

"You knew it!" ejaculated the credulous mountaineer, with the most perfect amazement.

"Yes, I knew it," returned the wily Hacket, who saw at once that he had the game in his own hands. "I knew the whole, except that you were the hero of this strange adventure. Hans told me so himself, on our way here."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the mountaineer, who now regarded Hacket with a degree of respect, which almost amounted to awe.

"Certainly!" responded Hacket, "he told me all, and now compose yourself. You have nothing to fear, I will present you to him."

Kennybol started back, with an exclamation of horror.

"Be calm, and fear nothing," repeated his companion. "It is necessary that you see him, for he is now your chief, and

comrade ; but do not advert to the occurrence of this morning in his presence. You understand ?”

Kennybol assented, and reluctantly enough accompanied Hacket, toward the part of the mine where the giant was. As they approached the spot where Ordoner was standing with Norbith and Jonas, Kennybol accosted the latter :

“Norbith and Jonas, my brothers, God be with you.”

“And with you,” replied Jonas : “we all need his presence.”

“Ah, my brave friend,” said the mountaineer, as he recognized Ordoner, “welcome here ; your courage it would seem has been successful.”

Ordoner returned his greeting, but not understanding the meaning of his allusion, was about to ask an explanation, when Norbith interrupted him, by asking Kennybol if he was acquainted with the stranger.

“By my guardian angel, that I am,” replied the mountaineer, “and I love and honor him. He is devoted to our cause, as he has already shown.”

This remark was accompanied by a look of intelligence, which Ordoner was about to ask the meaning of, when Hacket, who had been in search of the giant, whom all the bandits avoided with terror, approached and said : “Kennybol, my dear friend, this is our comrade and leader, Hans of Iceland.”

“Kennybol cast upon the giant a look, in which there was more of surprise than alarm, and then whispered in Hacket’s ear,

“Seignior, the Hans whom I encountered near the Walderhog this morning, was a man of low stature.”

“You forget,” replied the other, also in a whisper, “that he is a demon.”

“True,” replied the credulous huntsman with a shudder, and a secret sign of the cross ; “he has changed his form.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CAMPAIGN SHREWDLY PLANNED. THE MARCH OF THE REBELS.

Just before dawn, on the morning succeeding the evening when the scene described in our last chapter took place ; two personages, who have already made their appearance in our history, met, as if by appointment, in a thick grove of oaks, not far from the miners’ rendezvous.

“Will your grace deign to excuse me, for making you wait so long ?” began the shorter of the two. “I have myself been

detained by some unexpected occurrences.”

“Such as what ?”

“Why, the chief of the mountaineers, Kennybol, did not arrive till very late, and then we found a spy in the camp, and some time was lost in deciding what was to be done with him.”

“Who was he ?”

“Some fool, who thrust himself abruptly upon our councils, and of whom we could make nothing. I thought him a spy and would have had him poniarded, but it was discovered that he bore a pass from some felon, who was hung at Skongen, the other day, and the miners took him under their protection ; probably, he is nothing more than some inquisitive traveller, or some wandering *suivant*, after all ; but whoever he is, I have taken measures to secure him.”

“Well, does everything go on prosperously ?”

“Very prosperously, your grace. The miners of Guldbraushall and Farær, under Norbith and Jonas, and the mountaineers under Kennybol, ought to be at this moment on their march. At four miles from the Blue Star, they will be joined by their companions from Hubfallo, and Sund Mær. The Kongsberg forces, and the iron-workers of Smiasen, who have already driven in the garrison of Wahlstrom, wait them some miles farther on ; and the entire force when united, will halt for the night in the gorge of the Black Pillar, about two miles from Skongen.”

“And how was your Hans of Iceland received ?”

“With implicit confidence.”

“I wish I could revenge my son’s death on the real monster. What a misfortune that he escaped us.”

“Nevertheless, my noble lord, his name will be of essential service to us ; and by bestowing it upon the false one, we may fall upon the means of getting the true Hans into our power.”

“But how can you venture to permit so large a force to approach so near Skongen, Musdamon ?”

“There is no danger, my lord. Let your grace send a message at once, to Colonel Vauthen, whose regiment is now in Skongen, and inform him that the rebels will encamp to-night at the Black Pillar, without intrenchments. The place is formed by nature for an ambuscade—they may be cut off to a man.”

“I understand you, my dear Musdamon ; but what was the necessity of collecting the rebels in such numbers ?”

"The more formidable their force, the greater the crime of Schumacker, and the higher your grace's merit in averting its consequences. Besides, it is desirable that the insurrection should be crushed at one blow."

"Still, I think it would be as well that they should not approach so near Skongen."

"The spot selected, my lord, is the only pass in the mountains where they will be entirely defenceless. None will ever leave it alive, except those we wish to hand over to the tribunals."

"Admirably done, Musdamon. There is something admonishes me that we must finish this affair at once; for things look dark in another quarter. You know we set on foot an inquiry at Copenhagen, to ascertain what papers those were which had fallen into the hands of Dispolson?"

"Well, my lord."

"Well! I have just learned that he, as Schumacker's agent, had some mysterious interviews with that cursed astrologer, Cambylsun."

"Who is lately dead, my lord?"

"Yes; and who, before his death, delivered over to this Dispolson certain documents——"

"Damnation! he had my letter, detailing our whole plot!"

"Your whole plot, you mean, Musdamon!"

"Pardon me, noble count! but how could your grace be so imprudent as to put yourself into the power of such a charlatan as Cambylsun? The old traitor!"

"Why, Musdamon, I am not quite so much of a sceptic as you are; and with some faith in his magic powers, I thought his craft and cunning might be still more serviceable to me."

"I wish your grace had but distrusted his fidelity, as much as you trusted in his science. But there's no cause for alarm; Dispolson is dead, the papers are lost, and before they come to light again, if ever they should, those whom they might benefit will be past all aid."

"In any event, no accusation can bring me into danger!"

"Nor me! protected, as I shall be, by your grace."

"Oh! certainly, my dear Musdamon, you may count upon me! But let us to business. I'll send a messenger at once to the colonel; my people are at hand. And then I'll go on to Drontheim, which the Mechlenberger has doubtless quitted long ere this. Do you stay here, and hur-

ry on the rebels; be faithful, and I will stand between you and all harm."

"Depend upon my best exertions, your grace;" and they parted—the chancellor for Drontheim, and his secretary to join the mountaineers and miners, who were already on their march.

The rebels had left the mine of Apsyl Coryh by another entrance, which debouched at some distance, directly upon the plain. The mountaineers led the van; they were all well armed with muskets and axes, and under the command of Kennybol. Next came the miners, and such of the peasantry as they had been able to induce to join them. Of this body, a considerable portion possessed sabres, pistols, arquebusses, and carbines, of every sort and size; but many had been obliged to convert the utensils of their daily labor into weapons of offence; and the spits and pitchforks, so much despised by Captain Lory, were, in many instances, forced to do duty in place of the noble rapier and pike. The rear was brought up by some twenty or thirty wagons, bearing ammunition and provisions; while far in advance of the column, marched the giant, with Hacket by his side, a massive iron mace in his hand, and an axe in his girdle.

Ordouer had in vain endeavored to approach Kennybol; he had been stationed near Norbith, and was obliged to keep his place; strange emotions filled his breast while he contemplated the scene around him, and beheld the banners under which he was marching, ornamented with the armorial bearings of Griffenfeldt, and covered with devices like the following: "*Long live our liberator, Schumacker!*" "*Death to Guldenlew!*" "*Death to d'Ahlefeldt!*" "*Freedom to the miners!*" For a long time he continued his way in silence, until, at length, passing beneath a high cliff, some features of which he seemed to recognize, he asked of one of his companions its name.

"The vulture's crest, the rock of Ælmæ," was the reply.

Ordouer sighed deeply as he thought of Ethel and the fane of Monckholm.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COUNTESS D'AHLEFELDT VISITS MONCKHOLM—DIPLOMACY—A DISCOVERY.

THE monkey, parrot, combs, brushes, ribbons, and all the furniture of a dandy's toilet, had been prepared for the return of Lieutenant Frederic, at the apartments of the Countess d'Ahlefeldt. A translation of Madame Scudery's last romance, bound

in morocco, with silver clasps, had been placed by his fond mother upon the table, between the essence bottles.

After the indulgence of her maternal solicitude, the countess felt herself at liberty to gratify her malevolence toward Schumacker and his daughter; for by this time the departure of General Levin had left them defenceless.

During the last fortnight, much had taken place at Monckholm which she did not comprehend, and which she determined to investigate. In the first place, who was this serf or peasant, to whom Frederic supposed the prisoner's daughter had surrendered her affections, if not her person? What was the connection between the Baron Ordoner and the state criminals? and what was the explanation of his extraordinary absence, at a time when the two realms were occupied with the preparations for his coming nuptials? What, in fine, had taken place at the interview between General Levin and Schumacker? As to all these things the countess was left in conjecture; and, to clear up the mystery, she determined to make a descent upon Monckholm, counselled at once by her curiosity as a woman, and her malice as an enemy.

It was evening, and Ethel, in the solitary garden, was engraving, for the twentieth time, some favorite sentiment upon the window of the postern, with the diamond of her ring, when that postern, through which Ordoner had departed, opened for the first time since his absence. The young girl trembled and started back, as a tall woman, dressed in white, presented herself before her.

The stranger's countenance bore an expression, in which a desire to appear kind and gracious, mingled with involuntary admiration of the beautiful being before her, struggled with hatred and malevolence.

Ethel looked upon her with astonishment, and almost with apprehension; except the old nurse, who had died in her arms, she was the first female she had seen since her melancholy sojourn in Monckholm.

"My child," said the stranger in a tone of studied mildness, "are you the daughter of the prisoner?"

Notwithstanding her effort to be gracious, there was something inexplicably repulsive in the air of the stranger, which caused the young girl to recoil from her advances, as she replied:

"My name is Ethel Schumacker. In my infancy, my father tells me, I was called countess of Kongaberg and princess of Wellin."

"Your father told you so?" replied the stranger with a rising sneer, which she immediately repressed, and continued in a tone of affected sympathy: "you have been very unfortunate, have you not?"

"Misfortune received me at my birth in his iron arms, as my noble father says, and will never release me until my last hour."

"And do you never murmur at the unhappy fate which has made your home a prison? do you never curse the authors of your misfortunes?"

"Never! lest our curses should bring upon them ills worse than we ourselves suffer."

"But," continued the stranger, "do you know who are the authors of your wrongs?"

Ethel reflected for a moment, and then replied:

"We are here by the will of Heaven!"

"Does your father never speak of the king?"

"The king? Ah! I have been taught to pray for him daily, though I know him not."

Ethel could not understand why her visitor bit her lips at this answer; but the other continued:

"Did your unhappy father never mention, in his wrath, the names of General Eversdorf, Bishop Spollyson, and Count d'Ahlefeldt?"

"I know not who you are speaking of."

"Did you never hear of Levin de Knud?"

The recollection of the scene which had so lately passed between her father and the governor, had not yet escaped her:

"Levin de Knud!" she replied, "I think that is the name of a man of whom my father speaks with much affection."

"How! when?" cried the stranger.

"Yes!" continued the girl, "it was Levin de Knud that my father defended so warmly, a day or two since, against the accusations of the governor of Drontheim."

The astonishment of the stranger was redoubled.

"What!" she exclaimed, "against the governor of Drontheim? Do not trifle with me, girl, I came here to serve you. Do you tell me that your father took the part of General Levin de Knud, against the governor of Drontheim?"

"General! I think he called him captain; but now I recollect, you are right, he had become a general. Yes, my father manifested so much regard for him, as to offend the governor."

"Here is another mystery!" said the stranger to herself, but determined to satisfy her curiosity she persisted; "My dear child, tell me what really passed then be-

tween your father and the governor of Drontheim."

Fatigued by this cross examination, Ethel looked the stranger full in the face, and said :

"Am I a criminal, then, that you question me thus?"

The stranger was momentarily embarrassed by the spirit of this reply. She perceived that she was in danger of losing her pains, by offending the one from whom she sought information. At once she changed her manner, and in a sad and almost affectionate tone of voice, said :

"Ah! you would not answer me thus, if you knew why, and for whose sake I come!"

The blood rushed into Ethel's face, her heart beat violently; with a mixture of impatience and diffidence, she exclaimed :

"Do you then come from him? Ah! tell me, what message did he send me?"

"From whom?" demanded the stranger.

Ethel was about to reply, but before she had uttered the name dearest to her heart, the peculiar expression, which beamed through the eyes of her visitor, checked her. It was like a flash of infernal joy, which might have shot from hell itself. The young girl was warned, and she simply answered :

"You know not the person of whom I spoke."

The visitor could scarcely conceal her rage and disappointment, but resuming her benevolence of manner, she exclaimed :

"Poor girl! what can I do for you?"

Ethel did not hear her; her thoughts were far away, beyond the mountains of the north, in quest of her wandering lover; her eyes were cast down, and her hands clasped, as if in silent prayer.

"Does your father, then, never hope to escape from his prison?" asked the stranger; but it was not until she had twice repeated the question, that Ethel comprehended her sufficiently to answer, as she did with tears in her eyes :

"Yes."

This reply seemed to excite the stranger's curiosity anew.

"He does?" she cried. "How? when? by what means?"

There is something in the unaffected simplicity of a young and virtuous girl, which often sets at defiance, the malice and deceit of those grown old in wickedness; and that because the very simplicity is incomprehensible to them. The unknown was discomfited; she at once relinquished her attempt to entrap Ethel by an af-

fectionation of tenderness, and changed the mode of her attack.

Assuming then an air of blunt sincerity, she placed her icy hand upon Ethel's arm, and said :

"Listen to me, girl! Do you know that a new judicial inquiry, which concerns your father's life, is to be directly set on foot? and that he is suspected of stirring up the miners to revolt?"

"Judicial inquiry! revolt!" said Ethel with a vacant air; "explain yourself, I do not understand you."

"Your father has conspired against the state; his crime is suspected, and will soon be proved; and the penalty of that crime will be death."

"Crime! death!" repeated the poor girl.

"Crime and death!"

"My father, my noble father! his days are passed in hearing me, while I read the Scriptures and the Edda. And is it him you accuse of conspiring against the state? How? what has he done?"

"Look not upon me with such an angry brow. I am not your enemy. Your father is accused of a high crime; I come to inform you of it, and perhaps you may find that instead of your displeasure, I am entitled to your gratitude."

Ethel was touched by this reproach.

"Pardon me! noble dame, pardon me!" she cried; "if I have treated you unkindly, recollect that we see none but enemies here; you will pardon, will you not?"

The unknown smiled.

"Do you mean to say then," she asked warmly, "that you have never met with a friend since you have been here?"

Ethel blushed deeply, hesitated, and then replied :

"Yes, lady; God knows the truth, we have found one friend, and only one."

"Only one?" repeated the unknown, eagerly. "His name? tell me at once. You know not how important it may be; it concerns your father's life. Who is he?"

"I know not," replied Ethel.

The unknown grew pale with rage. "Will you trifle with me, when I am desirous to serve you?" she exclaimed. "Beware! your father's life is at stake: tell me at once, who is this friend you speak of?"

"Heaven knows, lady!" answered the terrified girl; "I know nothing of him but his name, and that is Ordoner."

"Ordoner! Ordoner!" exclaimed the unknown, trembling with agitation. "And what is his father's name?"

"Indeed, I know not; what is his

family to me? It is enough, that he is the noblest and most generous of men."

The accent and manner of Ethel as she pronounced this sentence, made her auditor the mistress of the cherished secret of her heart. Recovering her self-possession, and fixing her eyes upon her victim, she continued:

"Have you heard of the approaching marriage, between the son of the viceroy and the daughter of the present grand chancellor d'Ahlefeldt?"

A question upon a subject so indifferent to her, at once restored Ethel to her equanimity; and she replied, "I believe I have," in so careless a manner, as almost to convince her questioner, that she was indeed ignorant of the identity between her Ordoner, and the bridegroom elect.

"What do you think of the marriage?" continued the unknown.

"I? nothing! only I wish the parties all happiness," replied Ethel, without the slightest emotion.

"The counts of Guldenlew and d'Ahlefeldt, the fathers of the young couple, are your father's bitterest enemies."

"Still, I wish their children all happiness."

"It has occurred to me," remarked the crafty stranger, who was determined to fathom her suspicions to the utmost, "that if your father's life should be endangered by this new accusation, his pardon might be obtained on occasion of this great marriage, by interesting the son of the viceroy in his behalf."

"May all the saints bless you, noble lady, for the suggestion. By what means can we gain access to the son of the viceroy?"

The perfect good faith in which these words were uttered, struck the unknown with amazement; but she persisted:

"What! is it possible that you do not know him?"

"I? noble lady! You forget that my days have been spent in this fortress since my infancy."

"What did that old fool, Levin, tell me?" said the unknown to herself. "She cannot know him—and yet is that possible?" then raising her voice she continued: "you certainly must know the son of the viceroy, however, for he has been here."

"That may be, lady; but of all the men who have been here, the only one I know was my Ordoner."

"Your Ordoner!" interrupted the other. "But tell me," she continued, without regarding the embarrassment of Ethel, "do you not recollect, among those who visited

here, a young man of noble mien; of tall stature; graceful and dignified in his deportment; with eyes of blue, sweet though piercing; and chestnut hair, which——"

"Oh!" interrupted Ethel; "it is him—my betrothed, my beloved Ordoner! Tell me, noble lady, when did you see him? What tidings do you bring me of him? When did you meet him? He told you that we loved, did he not? Alas! his poor prisoner girl, has nothing but him to love in the world. It was but eight days since, that he was here. I can see him now, with his green mantle, under which beat so warm a heart! and his black plume hanging so gracefully over his noble brow!"

Thus far had Ethel proceeded, when she saw the tall figure of the unknown, agitated with uncontrollable passion; the stranger struggled for utterance; and the poor girl soon heard ringing in her ears, in accents of frenzy, this dreadful sentence:

"Wretch! you love Ordoner Guldenlew, the betrothed of Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt, and the son of your father's mortal foe, the viceroy of Norway."

The countess vanished, and left Ethel senseless upon the ground.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS INFORMER.

ABOUT the same time that the rebel miners left the mine of Apsyl Coryh, the regiment of Monckholm arrived at Skongen. After giving the necessary orders for billeting his men, colonel, the Baron Vauthen, proceeded to his quarters, which he had located in the only hotel of importance which the town could boast. Before, however, he had entered the door, he was arrested by a heavy hand, which was laid upon his shoulder with an unusual degree of familiarity; and a deep-toned voice requested a moment's interview.

The colonel turned, and perceived a man of low stature, who was enveloped from head to foot in a long coarse robe, like that of a religieuse, or a hermit. His features were concealed, by the cowl, which was drawn entirely over his face, and left nothing visible by which he might be identified, except a long red beard, and the immense gloves which covered his hands.

"Well, my brave fellow, what do you want with me?" answered the colonel sharply.

"Colonel of the arquebussiers of Monckholm," said the stranger, "follow me; I have important information to give you."

The baron remained silent for a moment, and regarded the other attentively.

"Important information," repeated the stranger.

Struck by his manner, which was grave and earnest, the baron, anxious for any intelligence which might be of service to the momentous expedition, with the command of which he had been intrusted, at once signified that he acceded to the invitation.

The stranger preceded him for a short distance beyond the confines of the village, and then pausing, asked:

"Colonel, would you like to exterminate these rebels at a single blow?"

"Why, that would not be a bad way of beginning the campaign," returned the colonel with a laugh.

"In that case," continued the other, "place your troops in ambuscade in the gorges of the Black Pillar to-day; the band of the revolvers will encamp there to-night. When you see the first fire kindled attack them. The victory will be easy."

"That is good news, my brave fellow. I thank you for it—but how did you obtain your information?"

"If you knew me you would hardly ask that."

"Who are you, then?"

The stranger stamped impatiently with his foot, and replied: "That I did not come here to tell you."

"Fear nothing; the good service you have done shall be your safeguard. Perhaps you have yourself been one of the rebels?"

"I refused to join them."

"Ah, a faithful subject of the king. Why then refuse your name?"

"Because it is of no importance that you should know it."

Still desirous to obtain further intelligence from his strange visitor, the colonel persisted:

"Tell me," he inquired; "does the famous Hans of Iceland command the rebels?"

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated the other with a peculiar gesture, and a sort of unearthly laugh. No other answer could the colonel obtain, nor was the stranger more communicative in regard to the names of the other leaders, or the amount of their forces.

"Colonel of the arquebussiers of Monckholm," he said at length, "I have said all I had to say. Do as I have told you. Place your whole regiment in ambush on the spot which I have pointed out, and you will destroy the entire force of the enemy."

"By not disclosing your name," said the colonel, "you will deprive the king of the opportunity of testifying his gratitude, but I trust you will not refuse this purse as a token of mine;" and he handed him a purse of gold.

"Keep your money, colonel," was the stranger's reply. "If you need it, I am in a situation to *pay you* for shedding human blood;" and he pointed to a large wallet which hung from his girdle.

Before the colonel had recovered from his astonishment, the stranger had disappeared. On his way to his quarters, the soldier was pondering upon the propriety of acting upon the advice of the mysterious unknown, when a courier from the Count d'Ahlefeldt overtook him, and placed in his hands dispatches from the chancellor conveying the same information, and directing movements similar to those suggested by the unknown.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE AMBUSCADE.

"THE wind is rising fast as evening sets in, comrade," observed Kennybol, as he permitted his eyes to wander, for a moment, from the person of their giant leader, and turned toward the standard-bearer, who stood by his side.

"It does, indeed, captain," returned the mountaineer, shifting, with a sigh of fatigue, the heavy banner-staff from one shoulder to the other; "and I am inclined to think, that we shall find it cold enough to-night in the gorge of the Black Pillar. It blows like mad through the ravines which lead down to the pass."

"Then we must make fire enough to scare the owls out of their haunts, upon the mountain-tops and in the ruined castles on the cliffs."

"Why would it not be a good plan, captain, to set fire to the pine woods which line the hill sides? I should like to see an army warming itself by a burning forest."

"That would never do, Gulden Styper," replied Kennybol; "what would become of the bears, the deer, the pheasants, and hares? They are made to be cooked, 'tis true, but not to be burned."

"Oh, captain," returned Styper, with a laugh, "leave me to take care of the game."

"Are we far from the Black Pillar?" inquired another of the mountaineers.

"We shall enter the pass about night-

fall," replied Kennybol; "we are near the four crosses now."

For some moments, nothing was heard but the heavy tramp of feet, as the weary multitude held on their way; and then Kennybol resumed:

"You have been at Drontheim for some days, Gulden Styper, have you not?"

"Yes, captain," was the reply. "My brother George, the fisherman, was taken sick, and I went down to take his place in the boat till he recovered, just to save his family from starving during his illness."

"Did you, when you was there, see anything of this famous prisoner, Schumacker—Glifferhein—what is his name? I've forgot it already, though they say that we are revolvers on his account; and his arms are embroidered upon that very banner which you are carrying now."

"I wonder if that is what makes it so infernal heavy?" muttered the standard-bearer, and then continued; "you mean the prisoner of Monckholm, I suppose, captain. But how could I see him? To do so, I should needs have the fiery eyes of our giant yonder, to look through walls and over mountains, (though for a demon, I must say, he does not smell very strong of brimstone;) or else the fairy queen's ring, to take me through keyholes. No, captain, I did not see him; and, between you and me, I do n't believe there is but one man in our army who has seen him."

"One, only! You mean the Seigneur Hacket. But he is no longer with us; he departed to-day for——"

"No, I do not mean Hacket, captain."

"Who, then?"

"The young man in the green mantle and the black plume, who came among us so strangely last night."

"What! he who marches in the rear with Norbith?"

"Yes; he knows this famous count, captain, as well as I do you."

Kennybol gave his companion a knowing look from the corner of his eye, tapped him upon the shoulder, and, with an air of great self-complacency, said, "I thought so."

"Yes, captain," continued the standard-bearer, changing his banner-staff on to his other shoulder again, "the young man in the green mantle went over to Monckholm to see this Count What's-his-name, and walked into the royal fortress with as little ceremony as Tom or I would walk into the royal chase."

"Ah! and how came you to know all that?" asked Kennybol.

The old mountaineer seized the captain

by the arm, and, opening the leather wallet by his side, with extreme caution whispered, "Look there!"

"By my patron saint! it shines like a diamond," exclaimed Kennybol. It was, indeed, a rich buckle of diamonds, which Gulden Styper had secured to the interior.

"No, it is a diamond," he replied; "as true as that the moon is two days' march from the earth, or as that my belt is made of buckskin."

Kennybol seemed startled by this discovery. He at once assumed an air of severity, and addressed his companion as follows:

"Gulden Styper, of the village of Chol Sø, in the mountains of Keole, your father, Medpeath Styper, lived to the age of one hundred and two years, and led a life without reproach—for I do not consider it an offence against good morals, to kill the king's bucks and does. You, yourself, Gulden, are no chicken; your hair is grizzled by the snows of some fifty winters, and you have arrived at a time of life which can hardly be called youth, except in the case of an owl: and, my friend, let me tell you, that I would rather those diamonds should turn to worthless pebbles, than to think that you came not honestly by them."

"Captain," replied the mountaineer, "I do assure you I did come honestly by them."

"Indeed!" said Kennybol, in a tone which seemed balanced between confidence and distrust.

"So help me God and my patron saint!" continued the other, "I did so; and in this way: It was one evening near sundown; I had just been showing the way to the spladgest of Drontheim to some people who were bearing the body of an officer thither, from the sands of Urchtal; when (it was about a week ago) a young man approached my boat and said, 'Take me to Monckholm!' At first, I hesitated; 'a free bird is a fool,' thought I to myself, 'to fly about a cage.' But the stranger was so haughty and commanding, and he leapt into my boat with such an air of authority, that I took up my oars (my brother's oars, I should say) at once. It was my good angel, who influenced me to do so. For, when we had arrived at Monckholm, and the young gentleman had spoken to the officer of the guard, he was admitted, and before leaving me, he threw me the diamonds which I showed you, as a fare; all of which would have fallen to my brother George, if Heaven had not so ordered it, that I should have

been doing his duty, when this noble personage arrived. And that is the whole truth, Captain Kennybol."

"I believe you," replied Kennybol, whose confidence was entirely restored; "but are you certain that the young man you speak of, is positively the same who is behind with Norbith's party?"

"Certain! I should know his face among a thousand; besides, he wears the same green mantle, the same black plume——"

"It must be him."

"And there can be no doubt that he went to see the famous prisoner, for his business must have been of a mysterious nature, and of great importance, or he would not have thrown an article of this value to a boatman for ferrying him over. Besides, since he has been with us——"

"You are right, Gulden."

"And what is more, captain, I have an idea that he stands higher in the confidence of the great count, than this Seignior Hacket, who, between you and I, has something of the tiger-cat about him."

Kennybol nodded his assent, and said in return:

"Comrade, you have expressed my opinion exactly; I have all along felt disposed to place more reliance upon this stranger than upon Seignior Hacket, and one thing I am confident of, we owe the assistance of the demon, if it should avail us anything, to this young man, and not to the other."

"Is it possible?" inquired Gulden.

Kennybol had opened his mouth to answer, when some one tapped him on the shoulder and drew him aside. It was Norbith.

"Kennybol," he said, in a low tone, "we are betrayed. Gormon Wæstræm has just returned from the south. The regiment of Monckholm is on its march against us; the hulans of Slæsvig are already at Sparbo, and several companies of Danish dragoons will join them at Lævig. The lower passes are all full of troops. My advice is that we push on without halting, to Skongen; once in possession of that place, we can bid them defiance. Besides, Gormon thought that he saw from a distance, the gleaming of bayonets among the brushwood of the defiles near the Black Pillar."

The young chief was pale and anxious, but his countenance and his voice were resolved and firm, and his courage unabated.

"Is this possible?" exclaimed Kennybol.

"Certain," returned the other.

"And the Seignior Hacket?"

"Is either a traitor or a coward, depend upon it, comrade. Where is he now?"

At this moment they were joined by Jonas, whose disturbed and agitated manner betrayed at once, that he was not ignorant of the bad news.

When the chiefs met, the two elders shook their heads.

"Well, Jonas!" exclaimed Kennybol and Norbith, at once.

The old man passed his hand over his wrinkled brow, and addressing himself more particularly to the mountaineer, said:

"It's all true—it's all true: Gormon Wæstræm has seen them!"

"Well, if it is true, what is to be done?" asked Kennybol.

"What, indeed?" returned Jonas.

"I think it would not be unwise to call a halt," said the mountaineer.

"It would be still wiser to order a retreat," said Jonas.

"Halt! retreat!" cried Norbith. "No! we must push on."

His companions in command looked upon the young chief with cold surprise.

"What!" returned Kennybol, "adventure with the arquebussiers of Monckholm, the hulans of Slæsvig, and the Danish dragoons in such force before us?"

"And the royal tutelage, and oppression, and our parents, and children, and wives starving behind us!" returned Norbith.

"That cursed royal tutelage!" exclaimed Jonas; "we cannot submit to that."

"But never mind that now," replied the mountaineer.

"Friend Kennybol," said the old miner, taking him by the hand, "you never had the honor to be a ward of our glorious sovereign, Christian IV. May the good king Olaus, now a saint in heaven, deliver us from the royal tutelage."

"We had better depend upon our swords than upon the saints, for deliverance!" cried Norbith.

"You speak like a young man," replied Kennybol. "You forget that our men are newly recruited, but poorly armed, and not more than two thousand in number; while the green-coats are a large force, and the best equipped and disciplined troops in the north of Europe. We were told we should take them by surprise, and scattered about."

"Still," insisted Norbith, "I see no advantage in retreating toward our mountains like foxes before wolves; we are all known; and, for one, I would rather meet death in the field than on the gallows. We can take life for life; and it is better to expose one's breast to the ball and bayonet, than one's neck to the axe and cord."

Old Jonas nodded his head, in token of assent, and exclaimed :

"Norbith is right! it is no use to go back; we shall not have relieved our brethren from the tutelage, and only have gained the gallows for ourselves."

"Give me your hand, my brave Norbith!" cried Kennybol, who already partook of their enthusiasm; "there is danger whichever way we turn, and it is better to march boldly off one precipice, than to back off another in trying to avoid it."

"Come on! come on!" exclaimed Jonas, striking the pommel of his sword till it rung in its scabbard.

Norbith detained him.

"Gently, brothers," he interposed; "be brave, but be prudent. Let us not halt till we reach Skongen, for the garrison is weak, and we can overpower it. But recollect, that we have first to pass through the defiles of the Black Pillar, and that must be done in darkness, and in profound silence, for the enemy are on the watch."

"I believe the arquebussiers have not yet passed the bridge of Ordals, on the other side of Skongen. But no matter; silence be our watchword, if you will."

"Silence be it," said Kennybol.

"Now Jonas," continued Norbith, "let us to our posts; to-morrow we may be in Drontheim, if we do but our best, in spite of the arquebussiers, hulans, dragoons, and all the green-coats of the north!"

The three chiefs marched at the head of three divisions; through the ranks the watchword "*silence*" was passed, with the rapidity of lightning. In a few moments the previously tumultuous and noisy array of the rebels became as mute as the dead, and as their column passed along with quick but cautious tread, they looked, by the fading light of the evening, like a troop of spectres, traversing the haunted ground of some vast cemetery.

As they proceeded, their pathway became narrower, and seemed to penetrate more deeply into the recesses of the mountains, which rose higher and higher, and steeper and steeper, on each side of their route. At a moment when the moon, as red as blood, pierced through the black masses of cloud which enveloped her, Kennybol looked about him; and then, turning toward Gulden Styper, whispered:

"We are entering the defile of the Black Pillar—softly!"

In fact, they had arrived where they could hear the noise of the torrent, which descending from the heights, soon joined the road which they were traversing, and by an occasional gleam of moonshine,

could be discerned in front, the tall and isolated shaft of granite, which, rearing its dark form against the horizon, gave to this singular pass the name of the gorge of the Black Pillar. The mountains were ascended from the narrow bed of the torrent in terraces, which resembled a stairway, constructed for the passage of giants, and crowning their tops was seen the forest, which covered the country to the lake of Sparbo.

The rebels continued their march in silence, and so dark and obscure was the pathway they trod, that even the occasional rays of the moon did not descend far enough to gild the heads of their pikes, and the eagles soared above them without perceiving the moving mass below. Once old Styper touched the shoulder of Kennybol with the butt of his carbine, and said in a low tone:

"Captain, captain, I am certain I saw something move behind those bushes yonder."

"I thought so too," was the reply, "but it was nothing more than the mist floating away from the torrent."

Again, soon after, Gulden seized him quickly by the arm:

"Look there!" he exclaimed, "above, high up among the rocks. Are not those bayonets which shine so brightly?"

Kennybol looked attentively at the spot indicated by his comrade, and then, shaking his head, replied:

"No. It is nothing but a mass of ice, so high that it catches the moonbeams."

No other causes of alarm presented themselves, and the band moved on unmolested and secure, until they had almost forgotten the perils which surrounded them. In about two hours the advanced guard had reached the forest of pines, which terminated the shaded defile, and Gulden Styper approached Kennybol, to congratulate him, that through the aid of St. Sylvester they had safely threaded the gorge of the Black Pillar, and that their road was now open to Skongen. Kennybol, as is the wont of men when danger is passed, made light of it. He never had apprehended anything serious, if you would believe him. They should have had fighting, he did not doubt, when they met the enemy: but that any attempt had been made to waylay them in these defiles, he said was an old woman's tale, and he had never really believed it. Just then his attention was attracted by two small lights, like living coals, which moved together in the thicket.

"Gulden," he exclaimed, "look there

by my soul's salvation, the tiger-cat that carries those eyes, must be as large a one as ever ranged the forest !"

"You are right," replied his comrade. "Indeed, if I did not know that Hans of Iceland was marching in front, I should be inclined to think they belonged to him."

"Hist!" returned Kennybol, bringing up his carbine. "It shall never be said that I left such game as that in the woods, without giving it a shot." And before his companion could prevent him, the reckless mountaineer had discharged his gun.

He was answered, not by the howl of a wounded catamount, but by a roar like that of an infuriated tiger, which died away into peals of unearthly laughter. Then ensued a scene which even the imagination can scarcely depict, and which no words can adequately describe. The report and flash of the gun, had disclosed the position of the rebels to their enemies. For an instant all was silence and darkness. And then, from the heights around, above their heads, rang out from thousands of warlike throats, the shout, "*Long live the king!*" accompanied by volley upon volley of murderous musketry, the red light from which disclosed a battalion upon every rock, and a soldier behind every tree.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BATTLE OF THE BLACK PILLAR.

It would be impossible to portray the confusion and dismay of the rebels, drawn out as they were in a straggling line through this long defile, when they saw the hills, which on each side towered above their heads, peopled with myriads of enemies, who offered no terms and granted no quarter. From the depths of the pass arose, as from the pit of hell, a thousand voices, mingled into one shout of rage, torture, and despair. Scarce a moment elapsed, from the time that Kennybol discharged his unfortunate shot, before he and his companions were enveloped in one dense mass of smoke, through which death flew incessantly from every quarter, and which was only illumined by the fire which flashed forth to destroy them; and when for a moment the wind lifted the cloud from off them, it was but to disclose fresh hordes of hussars and dragoons, rushing down upon them as eagles upon their prey.

The whole force of the rebels was stretched through the narrow defile to the extent of more than a mile; and attacked

as they were, at short intervals all along their line, their unwieldy body resembled that of a serpent, which wounded, and cut to pieces, still strives to turn and coil, and unite its separated parts. Though despairing, they had not yet lost their natural ferocity. Some of them, supplied with arquebusses, returned, as best they might, the fire of their enemy; but aside from the disadvantage of their position, and the shelter enjoyed by their enemies, there was another cause why their efforts were ineffectual: the arms and ammunition furnished by Hacket, were designedly bad; and when they succeeded in discharging a gun, its only effect was to enable their opponents to direct their aim in return with more fatal accuracy. Some, climbing upon each other's shoulders, and clinging to the almost perpendicular sides of the rock, endeavored by means of this sort of human ladder, to scale the heights, and hand to hand engage their foes; but no sooner had the heads of the most adventurous—covered with blood and sweat—appeared above the edge of the ledges and terraces, which were occupied by the troops, than they were swept off by the entlass, or blown to pieces by the gun, while the ascending mass beneath, was thrust with pike and bayonet, down into the abyss below.

The mountaineers, under Kennybol, had been the first to suffer, and the most exposed. It will be recollected, that they were just about entering the wood of pines which terminated the defile; but, as if by magic, at the fatal sound of their leader's gun, this wood swarmed with the enemies' sharpshooters; and the advanced guard were surrounded by a perfect circle of fire. Kennybol had seen his old friend, Gulden Styper, fall, pierced by wounds, at his feet; and his bravest and best companions dropped by scores around him; but he was himself unhurt; and, after the first tremendous shock, undismayed. Conscious that upon him chiefly rested the blame of the fatal discovery, he resolved to do all in his power to retrieve his error. And to this end, he called about him such of the survivors as he could most easily rally, and best depend upon, with a view of forcing an entrance into the wood, and by availing themselves of the cover of the trees, engaging the enemy upon more equal terms. In this emergency, his thoughts reverted to the giant, their demon leader, Hans of Iceland. At first, his regards were directed above, as if he expected to see him soaring upon wings of darkness, toward the top of some adjoining mountain, whose massive cliffs, he would presently

hurl down upon the foe; but above, nothing was visible but the vivid flashes of the musketry, which poured down a deadly hail upon the devoted heads of his followers. He looked around in front and in the rear, till at last, immediately before him, in the van, it is true, but evidently recoiling from the fire, he saw the colossal object of his search: who, at that moment, with troubled countenance, turned toward him, and asked him for his carbine.

Surprised at this demand from one, at whose command, he had supposed, would thunder the whole artillery of hell; yet credulous to the last, the gallant mountaineer resigned to him his favorite weapon, and looked, with awe, to see it change in the demon's hand to some mighty field-piece, which would scatter destruction through the surrounding ranks of the adversary: but he looked in vain. The pretended Hans, indeed, loaded and discharged his piece, but with far less skill, celerity, and effect, than the mountaineer himself; nor was his leading such as to bespeak him of more than mortal mould, or to create a new courage in his followers. Amazed, and unable to account for this, Kennybol had little time left for reflection. The danger was imminent; and taking the command himself, he succeeded, after a desperate and bloody effort, in making a lodgment in the wood. They could penetrate but a little distance, for the enemy within had thrown up a breast-work, while the main portion of his force were still left outside the shelter. They maintained themselves with a courage, however, which might eventually have proved successful, had it not been for a battalion of the regiment of Monckholm, which, placed securely upon a plateau of the rock opposite, and at some distance above them, kept up a deadly and well directed fire, which was wasting them rapidly away. Surrounded by the dying and the dead, the stout heart of Kennybol had almost failed him, and he was upon the point of giving up to despair, when he suddenly perceived an extraordinary confusion in the ranks of this terrible battalion of Monckholm. Instead of the shouts of victory, and *vive le Roi*, cries of rage, and screams of agony, arose from this formidable body; the fire of their musketry relaxed, and then ceased entirely; the smoke was swept away by the wind, and then it was that by the light of the moon, which was now shining bright, Kennybol perceived that masses of rock of immense size were falling, in rapid succession, from the cliffs above, upon the devoted columns of the arquebussiers, and crush-

ing them by scores. Their ranks were broken; whole lines fell at a time before the resistless force of these tremendous missiles. Hundreds attempted to fly from the fatal esplanade where they had been placed, but few escaped, for the only mode of egress was by a narrow pass, down and across which swept these enormous fragments of granite, as if bowled by a demon's hand.

At once, Kennybol's confidence in the supernatural powers of the giant returned; he had doubtless left him in the *melée*, to climb the mountain, and overwhelm the enemy with this fearful shower of rocks. But what was his surprise to find, upon looking about him, the colossal Hans, standing near at hand, and gazing with stupid amazement upon the frightful scene. Next, he thought some body of the rebels must have succeeded in gaining the heights, and overwhelming their adversaries from above; but no gleam of arms, no movement, no cries of triumph or revenge, betokened the presence of such a force. The mountaineer was confounded; but he did not suffer this unhopd-for diversion in his favor, to go unimproved.

The remains of the arquebussiers were now rallying at the foot of the cliff, beneath the terrace they had formerly occupied; their firing had ceased, and that of the *tirailleurs* who held the wood, and who were now moving to form a junction with them, had now slackened. Kennybol, taking advantage of this interval of quiet, rallied the relics of his forces, and causing every man to charge his carbine, led them to the attack. He showed his men the piles of dead upon the fatal plateau; spoke to them of the unexpected aid they had received; pointed out the confusion in the ranks of the enemy; and urged them, as their only chance of safety, to charge bravely, and cut their way through the opposers' lines, before fresh forces should come to their assistance. By so doing, they would also gain the opportunity of ascending the hill, from whence they might assist to extricate their friends, the miners, in the rear; or, if that should be found impracticable, by crossing the mountains, they would gain the forest of Sparbo, through which they could seek their homes. He was promptly seconded by his mountaineers. At his command, they formed in double ranks, and placing the giant at the head of one, and leading the other column himself, he advanced against the foe.

On the other side, the arquebussiers, reinforced by the hulans, had already reformed their ranks, and stood in array to

receive the attack ; but before a shot was fired, or a musket or bayonet was levelled, the sound of a trumpet was heard, and an officer, having a white flag upon a pike, stepped forth from the regiment of Monckholm.

At this offer of parley, the mountaineers halted, and the bearer of proposals was permitted to advance midway between the opposing parties. Here, he ordered his trumpet to be sounded thrice ; and in a voice sufficiently loud to be heard above the noise of the distant conflict, he proffered a free pardon to such of the mountaineers as would at once throw down their arms, upon condition that they surrendered their leaders, to be dealt with according to the pleasure of the king.

Scarcely had the words left his mouth, and before any answer could be returned by those whom he addressed, a shot was fired from an adjoining thicket, by some unknown hand. The unhappy officer raised his banner on high, staggered forward a few paces, toward the rebels, and fell upon his face, crying, "treason ! treason !" with his latest breath.

"Treason ! cowardly treason !" repeated the battalion of arquebussiers, as, infuriated with rage, they poured a deadly volley of musketry upon the mountaineers.

"Treason !" returned the rebels, discharging their pieces upon the foe, and rushing forward to the charge. The arquebussiers did not wait their attack ; but advancing to meet them, a struggle, hand to hand, took place over the body of the murdered officer ; and the slaughter, which had ceased for a while, and which, at one time, promised to be stayed, recommenced with tenfold fury.

While this dreadful scene was enacting, a figure appeared, and joined in the work of carnage ; who seemed, to such of the combatants as caught a glimpse of him, an incarnation of the fiend, in shape of beast. It was a man of low stature, clad in skins, but his swarty countenance and fiery eyes, bore little semblance to humanity ; his mouth filled with long sharp teeth, his hands armed with iron-claws, were stained with blood ; he wielded a sharp and heavy axe, and all fell before him ; his strength was superhuman ;—as none could withstand him, so none could harm him ; he passed with the rapidity of thought from one part of the battle field to another, dealing his deadly blows on all who crossed his path, but more particularly upon the arquebussiers of Monckholm. He uttered cries, of which some words, as *Gill*, and *vengeance*, might be understood ; but for

the most part, they resembled the ragings of a savage beast, mingled with the howlings and execrations of the damned.

Flying from this fiend, whose glowing eyes had fastened on him, a mountaineer threw himself at the feet of the giant, and exclaimed : "Hans of Iceland, save me."

"Hans of Iceland !" repeated the monster, as he advanced ; "are you Hans of Iceland ?"

The giant replied, by raising his battle axe, and striking a sweeping blow at his questioner. The monster, with a sneer, stepped aside, and the descending weapon crashed through the scull of the suppliant at his feet.

"Ha ! ha ! I thought Hans of Iceland had been more dexterous than that."

"'Tis thus that Hans of Iceland saves those who come to him for safety," replied the giant.

"You are right !" returned the other ; and after a moment's pause, dashed at his colossal antagonist, as the thunderbolt upon the stateliest tree of the forest.

The conflict was brief ; their axes broke from their handles at the first encounter, but the true Hans, tearing his heavy mace from the grasp of his counterfeit, at a single blow, stretched him senseless on the earth.

"Lay there !" he cried ; "you bore a name too heavy for you !" and like a destroying angel, he resumed his flight about the bloody field.

The giant, however, was not dead ; he had been stunned, but soon recovered, and began to exhibit signs of returning life. Before he could raise himself from the ground, an arquebussier of Monckholm threw himself upon him, exclaiming, "Hans of Iceland is taken !"

"Hans of Iceland is taken ! Hans of Iceland is taken !" rang through the ranks, the royal troops were encouraged to renewed exertions. Fresh detachments poured in to their aid ; the rebels were dismayed. Some succeeded in cutting their way through, and gaining a refuge among the surrounding hills, but the greater part, including their leaders, threw down their arms and surrendered at discretion. The miners who formed the centre and rear, had by this time been entirely overcome, and shared in every respect the fate of the mountaineers, except that a greater proportion of their body escaped, by returning upon their path, toward the place from whence they had come. Collecting his scattered forces, which, with the exception of the unfortunate battalion of the garrison of Monckholm, had suffered compara-

tively little, the Baron Vauthœn, taking with him his prisoners, set out on his way to Skongen, after sending a detachment of the dragoons and hulans in pursuit of the fugitives. It was still early in the morning, when some peasants of the neighborhood, attracted by curiosity to the battle field, returned to their cabins breathless with affright; and terrified their wives and children, by describing a strange beast, which they said they had seen, which had a head and face resembling that of a man, and sat upon a pile of dead, drinking blood.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DONJON OF THE LION OF SLESVIG AGAIN.

"OPEN the window, my daughter; the glass is very dinky, and I want to see the blessed light of day."

"Of day, father? Why, it is now nearly night."

"But the sun still shines upon the top of the hills which border the gulf. I want to breathe the fresh air through the bars of my dungeon, the sky is so clear and calm."

"Still, I fear we are going to have a storm, father."

"A storm. Ethel? Why do you think so?" replied the old man, with an air of some surprise.

"It is because the sky is so very clear, father, that I think we are going to have a storm."

"If I had only reasoned upon that principle when I was as young as you, I should never have been here. Your conclusion is a correct one," he added. "though not one which is usually formed by persons of your age; nor do I see clearly how your youth and my experience should agree so exactly."

Ethel seemed troubled by this simple and grave reflection. She made no answer, but sighed deeply.

"My child," resumed the old captive, "I have observed, for some days past, that you have grown pale and sad. 'Tis true, there is enough in our condition to call forth sorrow; but, hitherto, you have borne all with cheerfulness, and almost gayety. Your air of sweet contentment has often soothed the bitterness of my regret; but now, I fear, I must become your comforter. You have been my only solace, but I dread lest I should ill succeed in cheering you. Still, explain to me, my child, what troubles your gentle spirit. Immured as you have been from infancy in this prison, you can

know nothing, from experience, of the faithlessness of man. 'Tis true, I can no longer speak to you of hope, but there is no reason that we should despair."

The harsh and stern voice of Schumacker, while thus addressing his daughter, had become soft and gentle like that of a parent. Ethel listened to him in silence, till he had concluded, and then, throwing herself at his knees, and hiding her face in his lap, she gave way to a paroxysm of tears.

Heart-rending, indeed, were the emotions which filled the breast of the young girl. Never since the malignant stranger had revealed to her the name and connections of Ordoner, had she been able to close her eyes in sleep, or to compose her soul to rest. He was her all; she had no other earthly hope, and in his truth and affection she had believed as firmly as in words of holy writ. Who can, then, describe the pang with which she heard that he was not, and never could be hers?—that he was already, and long had been, the affianced husband of another? But this was not all. Jealousy, with its envenomed fang, for the first time fastened like a viper upon her virgin heart. She learned to think of Ordoner—no longer her Ordoner—as folded in the arms of one younger, handsomer, and richer than herself,—enjoying, in anticipation, all the ecstasy of their coming nuptials,—for she no longer believed that he had pursued his perilous adventure, undertaken for her sake and her father's. What! the son of the viceroy, himself a powerful lord, the accepted lover, and soon to be the husband of a noble lady, to expose his life for a wretched prisoner, to whom his father and his friends were deadly enemies—to risk his brilliant prospects and his brightest hopes for her, the simple daughter of a man proscribed and destitute? It could not be! No, he was unworthy; he had deceived her; he was happy with another. These were the thoughts which accompanied Ethel to a sleepless couch, and made night only a relief as it enabled her to give free vent to pent-up tears.

All traces of such a mental conflict, as we have seen, she had not been able to hide from her father; but she struggled bravely to hear up, and uttered no complaints to add to the bitterness of his lot.

"Ethel," said the old man, sadly, "how is this? You know nothing of men, why do you weep thus?"

No sooner had he uttered this, than the sweet and noble-hearted girl, by a powerful effort checked her tears, and arose.

She even forced herself to smile, as she answered :

"Forgive me, dearest father ; it was but a momentary weakness."

"Ethel," inquired Schumacker, "do you not sometimes think of Ordoner ?"

The young girl started.

"Yes," he continued ; "I mean Ordoner who is gone——"

"Father," interrupted Ethel, "why should we think of him ? I suppose, as you do, that he will never return."

"Never return ! Did I ever express such an opinion ? On the contrary, I have a strong presentiment that he will return."

"You did not think so, my father, a few days since, when you spoke of him to me with so much distrust."

"Distrust ! Did I speak of him with distrust ?"

"Yes, father ; and I have, at last, come to be of your opinion ; I think we are deceived in him."

"Deceived in him ! If that was my opinion, I now think I judged him unadvisedly. I never received anything but marks of sincere attachment from Ordoner."

"But no one knows better than you, father, how frequently deceit is concealed under fair professions."

"Men rarely bestow their kind words upon the unfortunate and disgraced ; besides, if Ordoner were not interested for us, why should he come here without any object ?"

"Are you sure that he does come here without an object ?" replied Ethel, feebly.

"What object can he have !"

Ethel was silent—the effect was too much for her ; she could not persist in the attack upon one she had so warmly defended against her father.

The old man continued :

"I am no longer Count Griffenfeldt ; no longer grand-chancellor of Denmark and Norway, the dispenser of the royal favor, the all-powerful minister—I am a poor proscribed prisoner of state ; to approach me, is to approach a political pestilence. Those men whom I have loaded with wealth and honors, cannot speak of me without execration. It is a mark of devotion for any one but the jailor or the executioner to cross my threshold. What, then, shall I think of one who dares to call himself my friend ? No ! I will not imitate mankind in their ingratitude. This young man has won my kindest regards ; never did I see a countenance beaming with more benevolence, never hear a voice which carried more consolation to the heart."

With what agony did Ethel listen to

these encomiums, which, but a short time since, would have caused her heart to thrill with joy ! The old man paused for a few moments, and then continued, in a still more solemn tone of voice :

"Listen to me now, my daughter, for what I have to say is of grave import. I am gradually, though gently failing ; day by day, I perceive my strength decrease—my end is not far off."

"Oh father !" exclaimed Ethel, "say not so—do not tell me that I am to lose you, also ; what will become of me without your protection ?"

"My protection !" returned Schumacker, "the protection of a proscribed man !—but fear not ; I have found a better protector for you. Now listen, and do not interrupt me. You judge Ordoner too severely, my daughter ; I knew not that you had imbibed a prejudice against him. His manners are frank and noble ; true, this proves nothing ; but I must tell you, that he has impressed me with a high opinion of his virtue and nobility of soul. I cannot resist the feeling, that he is faithful and true."

The old man paused for a moment, and fixing his eyes steadily upon his daughter, he said :

"Admonished of my approaching end, Ethel, and anxious for your future fate, I have determined, when he returns—as I have no doubt he speedily will—to make him your protector and your husband."

Ethel trembled and turned pale. At the very moment when her hope of bliss had fled for ever, her father had dreamed to realize it. The single thought, *how happy could I have been*, redoubled the bitterness of her despair ; she could not speak, for at a word her tears would have flowed afresh.

Her father waited for her answer.

"What !" she said, at last, in a feeble tone ; "would you, my father, destine your only daughter to be the wife of a man of whose family, connections, and even name, you are ignorant ?"

"I have already done so," replied the old man, almost imperiously. "I have already destined you to be his wife. What necessity is there for our knowing his family, when we know himself ? Reflect. He is your only hope ; and happily, I have reason to believe that he has not the same repugnance to you, which you seem to manifest toward him." Ethel raised her eyes with an imploring look toward heaven. "Listen," continued her father. "I repeat—his family and connections are of no importance. Probably he is of obscure origin, for the great are not in the habit of spending much of their time in prisons

from choice ; but you should recollect that Ethel Schumacker is no longer princess of Wollin, and countess of Kongsberg. No matter who this man may be, accept his hand. If indeed he be humble, so much the better. Your life will flow on in tranquillity, undisturbed by the envy of your inferiors, or the jealousy of your equals, and unlike that of your father, it will terminate more happily than it began."

Ethel threw herself at his feet. "Oh, my father! hear me!"

He looked upon her with surprise. "What would you say, my child?"

"Do not, in Heaven's name! paint a happiness that can never be mine."

"Ethel," he replied gravely, "do you think I have been trifling with you? No, I am in earnest. My own pride has brought upon itself its own punishment. Do not let yours leave you without a protector, because you scorn a virtuous though lowly man."

"Would to heaven," murmured Ethel, "he was but virtuous and lowly."

The old man paced the apartment in agitation. "Do not, my daughter," he said, "do not suffer me to die in a state of wretched uncertainty as to your fate. Promise me that you will accept this stranger. I place my trust in him."

"I will obey you in all things, my father, but do not indulge the hope that he will return."

"I do, and shall. I have weighed all the probabilities, and am certain from the tone in which he spoke your name——"

"That he loves me?" said Ethel bitterly.

"That I know not. It is a girlish expression," replied the old man, coolly; "but I am certain he will return."

"Dismiss this idea, father. If you but knew who he was, you would never wish him for your son-in-law."

"I do, and shall wish him to be so whoever he is."

"Suppose then this young man, who has been your solace, and who you wish to be your daughter's husband, should be the son of one of your mortal enemies—of the viceroy of Norway, Count Guldenlew?"

Schumacker recoiled with horror.

"What say you?" he cried. "Ordoner! our Ordoner! It is not possible!"

The glance of unutterable hatred which accompanied this burst, appalled Ethel. Too late she repented her imprudence; but the blow was struck. The old man trembled in every limb; his eyes flashed fire; his countenance was pale as death;

and from his livid lips feebly broke forth these words:

"Ordoner—yes; I see it now. Ordoner Guldenlew—yes! Schumacker! poor—foolish old man! Open your arms, and receive this generous youth, that he may stab thee to the heart!" He paused, and then stamping with rage, he continued in a voice of thunder: "Curse them! Will they send their whole infernal brood here to insult me in my distress? But the other day a d'Ahlefeldt, and now I am longing for the return of a Guldenlew! Monsters! who would have thought that he could be a Guldenlew! Oh! wretched, wretched man that I am!"

He threw himself into his chair, and clasping Ethel in his arms, exclaimed,

"My girl, my girl! you are wiser than your poor old doting father! You detected the serpent, notwithstanding his guile. Bless you for delivering him to my hatred."

Ethel trembled and sobbed.

"Be calm, my father!" she murmured.

"Help me to curse him! Swear that you will always hate this execrable son of Guldenlew!"

"Heaven forbid that I should take such an oath, my father!"

"Swear it, girl!" repeated the old man with vehemence; "swear that you will always preserve your present feelings toward Ordoner Guldenlew!"

"I do!" replied Ethel, conscious—too conscious—that those feelings were anything but what her sire supposed.

"Tis well, my daughter! I can bequeath you my hatred to my foes, if I cannot the wealth and honors they have deprived me of!" and the old man again gave vent to his imprecations. "But tell me, Ethel," he said, at last; "how comes it that you are so much more clear-sighted than I? How did you discover this traitor? how did you penetrate his secret?"

While Ethel was endeavoring to collect herself sufficiently to answer, the door of the apartment opened, and a man clad in black, having an ebony wand, and accompanied by a guard of halberdiers, also dressed in black, entered the apartment.

"What do you want with me?" demanded the prisoner, angrily.

The functionary, without answering, or even looking at the questioner, proceeded to unroll a parchment, to which was appended a huge green seal, and read as follows:

"In the name of his most gracious majesty, Christian IV., king of Denmark and Norway. Schumacker, prisoner of state in the royal fortress of Monckholm, and

his daughter, are hereby commanded to accompany the bearer of this mandate."

"What do you want with me?" repeated the old man.

The functionary in black made no reply, but again commenced reading his mandate.

"That will do," interrupted the prisoner, and rising, he motioned his daughter to follow him, as he left the apartment with the officer.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE HANGMAN AND HIS FAMILY. FAVORABLE PROSPECTS.

NIGHT had set in, the wind whistled around the sharp angles of the accursed tower; and the door and windows of the ruin of Vyglá, rattled as if they had been shaken all at once by the same hand.

The savage inhabitants of the tower—the executioner and his family—were seated in the large old hall, about the fire, which gleamed fitfully upon their hideous faces, and their scarlet garments. There was a strong resemblance to their parents, in the children of this dreaded functionary and his wife. Their mouths wore the same ferocious grin as did that of the father, and their eyes shone with the wild and maniac glare that characterized the eyes of the mother.

Orugix was seated upon a low bench, and his rapid breathing gave token that he had travelled in haste, and but lately returned. The regards of all were fixed upon him.

"Listen!" said he, breaking silence at last; "I've not been gone two days for nothing. I've news for you! If I am not executioner royal, in one month from this time, I hope I may never fix another running noose or swing an axe. Think of that, you young wolf-whelps! I shall leave you the grand scaffold of Copenhagen for an inheritance, after all!"

"Nychol, what has happened now?"

"And you, you old gipsy," continued Nychol, with a hyena laugh, "make yourself merry, too; for you shall have as many strings of blue beads as you can hang around your old skinny throat. Our agreement will be up in a month, it is true; but you will be glad enough to renew it, when you see me executioner royal."

"But what is it? Tell us all about it, father," cried the two boys, the oldest of whom was playing with a blood-stained scalpel, while the youngest was amusing himself by plucking alive a little bird, which he had taken in the same nest with its mother.

"What is it, my children?—Kill that bird, it makes too much noise; besides, you should not be so cruel: kill it, I say. What is it? Oh, nothing, nothing in the world, except that in a week from this time, Schumacker, the ex-chancellor, who is now in prison at Monckholm, and whose head I came so near having at Copenhagen, together with the famous brigand, Hans of Iceland, will both probably undergo an operation from my hands."

The wild eye of the woman assumed an expression of curiosity, as she exclaimed:

"Schumacker and Hans of Iceland! Why, how is this, Nychol?"

"Thus it is. Yesterday, you must know, when on my way to Skongen, I met, at the bridge of Ördals, the regiment of Monckholm on their march back to Drontheim. Well, one of the soldiers, who, I suppose, did not know the meaning of my red cap and clothes, told me that the arquebussiers had cut to pieces the brigands, that is, the insurgents, at the pass of the Black Pillar. Now these insurgents, you know, my gipsy, revolted in the name of Schumacker, and were commanded by Hans of Iceland. Hence it follows, that Hans and Schumacker will both be convicted—the one of rebellion, the other of high treason—crimes which will bring those worthy gentlemen to the block or the gallows. Their heads alone will bring me fifteen gold ducats apiece, besides the honor, to say nothing of several others, who——"

"But do tell me," interrupted Bechlie, "is Hans of Iceland really taken?"

"How dare you interrupt your lord and master, you woman of perdition! Taken? yes! Hans, and four other chiefs of the brigands, who acted as his lieutenants: their heads will bring me twelve crowns apiece, too, besides what I get for their bodies. Yes, Hans is taken, and, what is more, I saw him myself marching between the ranks."

"Oh, father! father!" cried the boys; "did you see him? How did he look?"

"Hold your tongues! You hallo like a couple of rogues protesting their innocence just before they are turned off. Yes, I did see him; he is a sort of a giant; he walked between ranks of soldiers, with his hands tied behind him, and his head bound up. He need not trouble himself much about his broken head, however," added the executioner, with a sinister smile; "I'll take care of that for him. His four companions marched behind him, also wounded, and the whole of them are on their way to Drontheim, where, to-

gether with Schumacker, they are to be tried for their lives before the grand-chancellor himself."

"What sort of looking chaps were the other prisoners, father?"

"The two first were old men; one wore a miner's felt-cap, and another the skin cap of a mountaineer: both of them looked downhearted. Of the other two, one was also a miner, but young: he marched with his head up, and whistled as he went: the other—do you recollect those travellers who stopped here some fortnight ago? on the night of the great storm it was."

"Yes; as well as satan recollects the day of his fall."

"Well, did you notice the young man who had that old fool in the white perruwig with him—the young man who wore a large green mantle, and had a black plume in his hat?"

"Yes, indeed I do," replied the woman; "I can see him now, as he stood when he said to me, '*We have plenty of money.*'"

"Well, old woman, I wish I may never break the neck of anything bigger than a woodcock, if he was not the fourth prisoner; he was closely wrapped in his mantle it is true, but the mantle itself I should know anywhere; and then his boots, his hat and plume, his walk and his whole figure, I could not be mistaken; I'll swallow the stone gibbet at Skongen, at one mouthful, if it is not the man. It would be funny, now would it not Bechlie, if I should have to shorten his life, after his having experienced my hospitality?" After chuckling a while at his butcherly conceit, the hangman continued; "Come, Bechlie, get something to drink of the strongest and best; we must turn off a glass to the health of the executioner royal, that is to be. I'll tell you what it is, I really felt almost ashamed to-day, to hang a miserable devil at Noes for stealing cabbages and bacon; it did seem degrading, when I thought of the great work which is before me. However, I concluded that it was not worth while to throw away the thirty-two shillings I should get for the job, and there it is," said he, throwing the money on the table. "But after I have taken off the heads of the ex-grand-chancellor and the famous Hans of Iceland, I'll dirty my hand with no more such small fry."

At this moment, the sound of a horn was heard at the gate.

"It is the horn of the archers of the high syndic, woman," cried Orugix.

He hurried down to the door, and soon reappeared with a package, of which he had broken the seal. "Here," said he, giv-

ing the parchment which was inclosed, to Bechlie, "here is something from the high syndic; let me know what it says. The devil taught you to read, which is more than he ever did me. I should not wonder if it was my letter of promotion; when people of such high rank as a grand-chancellor, and an ex-grand-chancellor are concerned, the one as judge, and the other as culprit, they ought at least to have an executioner royal in attendance."

The woman took the parchment, and after a few minutes study, read it out, while the children gazed upon her with a look of stupid wonder and admiration. It ran as follows:

"In the name of the high syndic of Drontheim, the provincial executioner, Nychol Orugix, is hereby commanded to repair forthwith to the city of Drontheim, and to take with him the axe of honor, block, and black hangings for the scaffold."

"Is that all?" exclaimed the hangman, discontentedly.

"That is all," was the reply.

"Provincial executioner!" muttered Nychol between his teeth.

He cast a look of disdain upon the mandate of the high syndic, and then proceeded:

"Well, I must obey I suppose; but you see they do call for the axe of honor, and the black hangings. See that the rust is rubbed off the axe, Bechlie, and clean the blood spots from the hangings as well as you can. It is no use to be discouraged; they cannot do less than promote me after it is over; but I do think it is very hard, not only to me, but to those who are to suffer, that they should not fall by the hand of an executioner royal."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CHANCELLOR AND HIS WIFE.

CLAD in a flowing robe of satin, lined and turned up with ermine, his head and shoulders covered by a voluminous judicial wig, and his breast adorned with decorations, and crossed by the collars of the orders of Dannebrog and the Elephant; the grand-chancellor of Denmark and Norway paced, with an anxious air, the apartment occupied by his wife, who alone was with him at the time.

"Come," said he at last, "it is now nine o'clock. Time to open the court. We must use dispatch, for it will be necessary to pass sentence to-night, in order that execution may be done early to-morrow morning, at the farthest. The high

syndic says the headsman will be here before dawn. Elphaga, have you ordered the barge to be in readiness to convey me to Monckholm?"

"It has been ready for you this hour, my lord and husband," replied the lady, rising from her couch.

"Is the litter at the door?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Very well; you say then, that there is an intrigue existing between Ordoner Guldew and Schumacker's daughter?"

"Yes; I am sure of it," replied the countess, with a smile of mingled bitterness and disdain.

"Well, that is odd. And yet, do you know that I have more than half suspected it heretofore?"

"And I, too," rejoined the countess. "It has been brought about by old Levin de Knud, and it is just what I should expect of him."

"Cursed old rascal of a Mecklenberger. I'll write to Eversdorf about him. If I could only succeed in disgracing him! Ah, let me see, Elphaga—a thought strikes me—I have it."

"How?"

"Thus: You must know that the prisoners whom we have to condemn at Monckholm to-night, are six in number. Schumacker—whom to-morrow, at this hour, I trust I shall no longer have reason to fear; the false Hans of Iceland, whom Musdamon procured. He promises to sustain that character to the last, depending upon Musdamon, from whom he has already received large sums of money and abundance of promises, for the means of escape. What a devil that Musdamon is! Three of the four others are the rebel chiefs, but the fourth is a stranger; who, no one knows how, was thrown into the midst of the rebels at their rendezvous at Apsyl Coryh. Musdamon, thinking it probable that he was a spy of Levin de Knud, took care that he should not escape, and his conduct since his capture has confirmed that impression. His first inquiry upon his arrival here as a prisoner, was after the general, and when he found that the Mecklenberger was absent, he appeared struck with consternation, and has ever since refused to answer Musdamon's questions."

"My dear lord," interrupted the countess, "why have you not examined him yourself?"

"How could I, Elphaga, occupied as I have been? I left it to Musdamon, whose interest it is as much as mine; besides, my dear, the man himself is of no conse-

quence; some poor vagabond, probably. But if we can make it appear that he was an agent of Levin's, and was found in the rebel camp, the inference that the general was in connection with Schumacker, will be so strong, that if it do not lead to his impeachment for a capital offence, it will at least afford sufficient ground for his disgrace and removal from office."

The countess meditated for a moment, and then said: "The plan is a good one, my lord. But what are we to do about this unlucky passion, which the Baron Thorvic has conceived for Schumacker's daughter?"

"Do not let that give you the least uneasiness, my dear; we have both lived long enough to know what men are made of. And do you suppose, that when Schumacker, the second time condemned, has undergone an infamous death upon the scaffold, and when his daughter has thereby been reduced below the level of the meanest grade in society, that Ordoner's love, which the romantic girl has painted in such glowing colors, will survive the shock? or that he will hesitate, for a moment, between the daughter of the high chancellor of the realm, and the degraded offspring of a wretched criminal, who has died a felon's death? If you do, you must judge man's heart by woman's, for I can assure you that no such feelings are to be found in the bosoms of the sterner sex."

"I trust you are right, my lord; but I hope you did not disapprove of my request to the high syndic, that this girl should be placed in the same box with myself, at the tribunal; I have a great curiosity to study the creature."

"There is no objection to what you wish; besides, anything that has a tendency to throw light upon this affair will be important," replied the chancellor; and then added, after a moment's study, "does any one know where Ordoner is at present?"

"No one! Like a true disciple of Levin de Knud, he went off upon some knight-errant scheme, but I hope that by this time he is at Ward Haus."

"If he is there, all is well; Ulrica will take care of him. But it is time I was gone; the tribunal must have assembled."

"One word more, my lord: I asked you yesterday, but you were too busy to answer me: where is my son? where is Frederic?"

"Frederic!" repeated the count, who strove in vain to conceal the dismay and horror with which he heard the question.

"Yes, Frederic! answer me; I insist upon it. His regiment have returned to

Monckholm without him. Swear to me that he was not in that dreadful conflict at the Black Pillar. Why does your countenance change so? I protest, I am in mortal terror about my son!"

The chancellor recovered himself.

"Elphaga," he replied, "be satisfied; Frederic was not at the defile of the Black Pillar. Look at the list of officers killed and wounded in the gazette, and convince yourself."

Oh, I have—I have seen it; there were only two officers killed—Captain Lory and Lieutenant Randmer, the young baron who used to be Frederic's companion in all the gayety of Copenhagen. Oh! he is not in the list, I know; but where is he? is Frederic still at Wahlstrom?"

"I believe he is," returned the count, gravely.

"Well, then, my dear," said the countess, with all the fondness she was capable of assuming, "grant me this favor: let Frederic return immediately."

The chancellor hastily broke away from his wife.

"Madam," said he, abruptly, "you must not detain me, the tribunal is waiting; as to what you ask, I can only say, it is not in *my* power to comply with your request."

"Not in his power," murmured the countess, when she found herself alone—"not in his power, and one word would make me happy. I always did hate that man, and I hate him now more than ever."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE TRIAL.

WHEN they had left the donjon of the Lion of Slesvig, Ethel, full of wonder and alarm, was separated from her father, and conducted by a succession of dark and winding passages, which she had never traversed before, to a small chamber, the door of which was shut behind her, after she had entered. Opposite the entrance she perceived a grated window, which opened upon an extensive hall, which was lighted by flambeaux and torches; on a bench before this window was seated a tall woman, dressed in black and closely veiled; and beside her, in obedience to an imperative gesture, Ethel took her seat in silent amazement.

The scene which presented itself before the open window was solemn and impressive.

The walls of the great hall were hung with black; from its lofty arched roof were suspended a row of lamps, beneath which,

at the farther extremity, was erected a judgment seat, covered with black, upon which were seated seven judges, robed in sable and ermine. The centre judge was distinguished by the richly jeweled collars, and insignia of several orders, besides those which appertained to the office of grand-chancellor; while the personage upon his right wore a sash of white over his black silk robe, such being the official costume of the high syndic of Drontheim. On the right of the judicial array, upon a raised platform, covered with a canopy, sat an old man in the mitre and stole of a prelate; on the left, at a table covered with papers, was seated a small man in the black silk gown of an advocate, whose head was enveloped in a huge white perriwig.

Opposite the judges was a wooden bench, behind which was arranged a line of halberdiers, who bore in their hands torches and flambeaux, which shed their flitting light upon the glittering pikes and uncovered heads of the soldiers and people with which the apartment was crowded.

All this seemed to Ethel like a dream. She knew not, nor strove to comprehend its meaning. Something which threatened her with ill, she doubted not it was; but so desolate and heart-broken had she become, since her faith in Ordener had been taken away, that she looked forward to any new disaster, not only without dread, but almost with a feeling of welcome, in the sad hope that it might be the last.

Soon the president, in a commanding voice proclaimed, in the name of the king, that the court was opened.

Then the advocate upon the left arose, and, in a low and rapid tone, read from a paper which he held in his hand, a long statement, which Ethel could scarcely understand. Of the few words which reached her ear, however, she did comprehend enough to perceive, that the name of her father, coupled with the terms, *treason, conspiracy, and death*, formed no small portion of the subject of the discourse; and calling to mind, in connection with this, the conversation of the unknown in the garden, she began to tremble for him, though careless for herself.

No sooner had the lawyer finished, than she turned to her silent and unknown companion, whose presence filled her with a sort of indescribable horror, and asked,

"Where are we? and what is all this?"

Another imperative gesture, commanding silence, was the only reply she received, and she again turned her attention to what was passing before her.

The venerable prelate on the right had

arisen, and Ethel heard him speak as follows :

"In the name of the most merciful and powerful God, I, Pamphilius Eleutheros, bishop of the province and royal city of Drontheim, crave audience of this court, now sitting in the name of the king, our lord, under God. I observe, then, that the prisoners who are about to be brought before this tribunal, are fellow-men and christians, and unprovided with advocates. Such being the case, I hold it my duty, and hereby announce my intention, to offer my service in their behalf, in the cruel position in which they are placed ; and in so doing, I pray God to strengthen my weakness with strength from on high, and enlighten my blindness with his holy and blessed light."

Thus saying, the bishop descended from his throne, amid the plaudits of the audience, and took his seat upon the bench prepared for the accused.

The president, after peremptorily checking the noise which had arisen, briefly thanked the bishop on behalf of the accused, and directed the officers to put the prisoners to the bar.

After a short silence, a distant murmur was heard, which rapidly approached ; the crowd opened to the right and left, at the advance of the halberdiers, and six men, chained and surrounded by guards, were brought before the tribunal. Of these, Ethel saw but the first ; he was an old man with a long white beard, clad in a dark robe. It was her father. For a moment, all things seemed to swim before the poor girl's eyes ; by clinging to the balustrade before her, she saved herself from falling, and lifting her eyes to Heaven, she sighed in a feeble voice :

"God pity me !"

The stranger beside her, turned and offered her salts. Revived for an instant, Ethel exclaimed in a low tone :

"Lady, noble lady ! for Heaven's sake speak to me ! let me hear the sound of your voice, to break this horrid spell which is cast over me !"

But the unknown was silent, and again directed her attention to the tribunal. The president was speaking.

"Prisoners," he said, "you are brought here to be examined on charges of high treason, conspiracy, and open revolt against our lord the king. Reflect, and answer distinctly and truly to the interrogatories which shall be put to you."

At this moment, a ray from a torch fell upon one of the prisoners, and gave Ethel a glimpse of a face, which caused her to shudder anew ; but the next instant the

light was removed, and the person was again thrown in the shade ; she could discover nothing. She thought he wore a huge green mantle, and that the long locks which hung down to his shoulders, were of chestnut hue ; but reflection convinced her she was mistaken. "No, it could not be Ordener. What should he do there ?"

Schumacker was seated at one extremity of the bench, and between him and the young man with chestnut hair, were the four other prisoners : the bishop sat at the other extremity.

Ethel's attention was soon called to another scene in the drama. The president arose and addressed her father :

"Old man," said he, "what is your name and occupation ?"

The man raised his venerable head.

"Formerly," he said, fixing his eyes upon the president, "I was called Count Grif-fenfeldt and Kongsberg, prince of Wollin, prince of the empire, knight of the orders of Dannebrog and the elephant, knight of the order of the golden fleece, in Spain, and knight of the garter, in England ; prime-minister, and inspector of the universities, grand-chancellor of Denmark, and——"

The president interrupted him :

"Prisoner, we did not ask what you were—we ask what you are now, and who ?"

"Oh, *now*," replied the old man, quickly, "now I am plain John Schumacker, sixty-nine years of age, and nothing but your original patron and early benefactor, Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt."

The president appeared confused, and the old man went on :

"I knew you very well, Count d'Ahlefeldt ; but as your memory did not appear to be so good, I merely thought I would endeavor to bring myself to your recollection."

"Schumacker," exclaimed the chancellor, in a tone of smothered rage, "you must not trifle with the time of the court."

"We have changed places, my lord—formerly I used to call you d'Ahlefeldt, and you me, Seigneur Count."

"Prisoner, you injure your cause, by calling to the attention of the court, the infamous sentence under which you were heretofore condemned."

"The infamy of that sentence, Count d'Ahlefeldt, appertains to others than me," exclaimed Schumacker, rising.

"Sit down !" thundered the president. "You insult the court, the judges, and the high source from which they draw their power. Recollect you hold your life *now*,

but at the sufferance of the king; and see if you can defend it against the charges which are brought against you."

Schumacker's only reply, was a shrug of the shoulders.

"Have you anything to say in regard to the charges which have been preferred against you?"

Schumacker continued silent, and the president repeated his question.

"Did you speak to me?" asked the ex-chancellor. "I thought, noble count, that you were addressing yourself. What am I charged with? Betraying a friend, like Judas Iscariot, with a kiss? Imprisoning, condemning, dishonoring a benefactor? I tell you, Seignior Chancellor, I know not why I am brought here, unless it is to see with what dexterity you can lop off innocent heads. I wonder if you will find it as easy to ruin me, as to ruin the nation; or if a single comma will serve for a pretence to put me to death, as well as a single letter did to provoke a war with Sweden."

Scarcely had he finished this bitter reply, when the advocate on the left arose, and moved the court, that John Schumacker be silenced, for insolence to the presiding judge.

"The right of speech must not be forbidden the accused, seignior private secretary," observed the bishop, calmly.

"No!" exclaimed the president, rising in haste; "let him say what he will, but confine himself to the point: if he understands his true interest, he will moderate his expressions."

"Apparently, the Count d'Ahlefeldt is more sure of his game this time, than he was in 1677."

"Be silent!" said the president: and then addressed the next prisoner, of whom he asked his name.

"Hans of Iceland," was the reply of the gigantic mountaineer, as he rose and exhibited his immense head, swathed in bandages; and towering far above those who surrounded him. A confused murmur ran through the crowd, and even Schumacker, for the moment, raised his eyes and looked up at his colossal companion in difficulty.

"Hans of Iceland," demanded the president, "what have you to say to the tribunal?"

The accused, in a confused and stupid manner, confessed that he was the leader of the rebels.

"Did you, yourself, excite the rebel-

lion," was the next question, "or were you persuaded to join it by another?"

"I was persuaded."

"By whom?"

"By one called Hacket."

"Who was this Hacket?"

"An agent of Schumacker's, whom he called Count Griffenfeldt."

The president addressed Schumacker: "Schumacker, do you know this Hacket?"

"You have anticipated me, Count d'Ahlefeldt," was the reply, "I was about to ask you the same question."

"John Schumacker," said the president, "you are carried away by your bitter feelings toward the court; your conduct will be duly appreciated."

The bishop here asked the private secretary, who acted as advocate and prosecutor, if Hacket was among the prisoners whom he had volunteered to defend.

"No, may it please your reverence," answered the secretary.

"Is it known where he is?" inquired the bishop.

"They were unable to take him; he escaped," replied the secretary.

"I rather think," observed Schumacker, "that he vanished altogether."

"Seignior secretary," continued the bishop, "cannot some one be sent in pursuit of this man? Is not his person known?"

Before the secretary could reply, one of the prisoners, a young man, with a bold and hardy look, arose and exclaimed: "It will be easy enough to find the wretch. I can describe him. He is a little man, with an open countenance, but that sort of openness which puts one in mind of the mouth of hell, and— But stay, seignior bishop, his voice is, for all the world, like the gentleman writing at that table, whom you just called *private secretary*; and, indeed, if this room was not so dark, and seignior, if the private secretary's face was not so covered by his wig, I think he would look very much indeed like this Hacket himself."

"Our brother speaks truly," cried two of the other prisoners, starting up.

"Really!" exclaimed Schumacker, with an expression of sarcastic triumph.

The secretary, whether from apprehension or from indignation, sprang up, and turning his back upon the prisoners, was about to address the court, when the president hastened to his relief.

"Prisoners!" he ejaculated in a voice of thunder, "remember that you are on trial for your lives, and beware how you insult the court in the person of its officer."

* An error of this kind, and the obstinacy of d'Ahlefeldt in persisting in it, was very nearly the cause of plunging Denmark and Sweden into a war in 1689.

"Nevertheless," observed the bishop, "your excellency will recollect, that a question of identity is pending, and if there should chance to be any points of resemblance between your private secretary and this Hacket, it will be useful to——"

The president interrupted him, and called upon Hans of Iceland.

"Hans of Iceland," he said, "you have had frequent intercourse with Hacket; tell us now, in order to satisfy his reverence, the bishop, if you ever perceived in the features of the secretary any resemblance to him?"

"None whatever," replied the well tutored giant, without hesitation.

"You see, my lord bishop," observed the president.

The bishop acknowledged that he was satisfied, and the president proceeded to the next prisoner.

"What is your name, and occupation?" he asked.

"Wilfred Kennybol—hunter."

"Were you among the rebels?"

"Yes, seignior; I'll tell the truth if it costs me my life. I led the mountaineer's at the defile of the Black Pillar."

"And what induced you to rebel against your lawful sovereign?"

"That I can easily explain, your worship. You must know, that our brethren, the miners, had long complained against the hardship of the royal tutelage, and could obtain no redress. They determined to take up arms and asked us to join them. We as brethren could do no less, especially as we thought their cause was just; and that is the whole of the matter."

"Did no one besides excite and encourage you to revolt?"

"Yes, seignior, that very Seignior Hacket, who constantly urged us to deliver a certain count, who he said was a prisoner at Monckholm, and who had sent him to us. We agreed to do what he requested, as we could do it as well as not if we succeeded."

"And this count was called Schumacker, or Griffenfeldt, was he not?"

"He was, please your worship."

"Did you ever see him?"

"Never until now, your worship. But if that old man, whom I have just now heard you call Schumacker, is he, I must say——"

"Say what?" interrupted the president eagerly.

"Why, that he has a splendid white beard, seignior, almost as fine a one as my sister's husband's father had; and he lived to be a hundred and twenty years old."

The obscurity of the apartment concealed the expression of disappointment, which flitted across the features of the president, who ordered the banners taken at the battle of the Black Pillar to be produced.

The banners were now brought forward and displayed, with their mottoes, and the armorial bearings of Griffenfeldt, before the tribunal.

"Wilfred Kennybol," continued the president, "look upon those banners! do you recognize them?"

"Yes, seignior! they are the banners which Hacket gave us in the name of Count Schumacker. He also distributed arms to the miners; we mountaineers did not need them, for we were already provided with guns. We are brought up to the use of them, seignior; and I, myself, trussed up as I am, like a fowl for the spit, set me free and give me my rifle, and I can bring you down an eagle from his loftiest flight."

"You will take notice, seignior judge," remarked the secretary, "that Schumacker, according to this evidence, distributed banners and arms to the rebels."

"Have you anything else to say, Kennybol, in regard to this matter?" asked the president.

"Nothing, please your worship, except that I do not think I deserve death. I only acted in good faith and brotherhood; and though I've been a hunter all my days, I never disturbed the king's game."

Without commenting upon this powerful plea, the court proceeded to interrogate the chiefs of the miners. Of these, the oldest, Jonas, gave testimony corresponding in every respect with that of Kennybol, as did the other, Norbith, except that he refused to say anything in regard to Schumacker: "having," as he proudly said, "sworn secrecy," and valuing the integrity of his oath, above his life. He denied that he revolted on account of Schumacker, but said he did so to obtain the means of rendering his mother more comfortable, and protested that it would be unjust to put him to death, inasmuch as she would then be left without support, and must starve without his aid.

The secretary then proceeded to sum up the charges, which had been substantiated against Schumacker, and confessed by the other prisoners. He then continued:

"We have now, seigniors judges, one other prisoner to examine, and to his examination I crave your special attention; for we expect to show, that this person is a secret agent of the authorities who have so long mal-administered the affairs of this prov-

ince. We expect to prove that the executive of this province has, either by culpable negligence, or by still more culpable connivance, contributed to the breaking forth of this rebellion, which has cost so many lives, and is now about to bring to the scaffold, Schumacker and his unfortunate dupes."

At this fearful conclusion, Ethel, who gave up her father's life for lost, felt as if the last blow was indeed upon the eve of falling; in her anxiety, she had lost sight of Ordoner, and was wholly unprepared for that which followed.

The sixth prisoner being now addressed, as the others had been, by the president, stepped forward boldly, threw off his disguise, and displaying the noble features and lofty figure of the lover of Ethel, answered:

"I am called Ordoner Guldenlew, Baron Thorvic, a knight of the order of Dannebrog."

A cry of surprise escaped from the secretary:

"The son of the viceroy!" he exclaimed.

The president shrank back in amazement into his seat. The court, the officers, the soldiers, and the people were all in confusion. Every one pressed forward to catch a glimpse of the unexpected culprit. In vain was order called from the chair; in vain were all attempts to enforce it; and a long time elapsed, before the proceedings could be resumed.

What, meanwhile, were the feelings of Ethel? they can better be imagined than described. Perhaps, indeed, so bewildered was she by the rapid succession of painful and extraordinary events, that she herself was scarcely conscious of what was passing, either within her own mind, or before her eyes.

What were the feelings of Ordoner himself? his views and purposes? These we must explain, in order rightly to understand the course he pursued.

Ignorant of the artfully-woven plot of the grand-chancellor and his confidant—ignorant, even, whether Schumacker was indeed innocent or guilty—Ordoner was certain only of one thing:—the mysterious absence of General de Knud. The presence of the most bitter and powerful enemies of the prisoner of Monckholm—the indecent haste with which the trial had been hurried on—the inveteracy of the prosecution, and the expected arrival of the executioner by daybreak, (of which he had been apprised,) all convinced him, that the death of Schumacker was deter-

mined upon, and that, beyond the present moment, no time remained to save him. Individually, he had no power; and, from his knowledge of the chancellor's character, he felt certain that no entreaty would prevail upon him to forego his long-cherished hope of revenge, and spare his enemy when the law had thrown him into his hands. But one alternative was left him, and this he resolved, at every hazard, to adopt. His resolution was taken, and he quietly awaited until the court should be enabled to go on with its proceedings.

Silence having at length been obtained, the president arose, and, with a tremulous voice, addressed the son of the viceroy:

"My lord baron," said he—

"Not lord baron, if you please," interrupted the prisoner; "call me Ordoner Guldenlew, as you call the other prisoner John Schumacker."

The president, after a moment's hesitation, proceeded:

"Ordoner Guldenlew, then it is, doubtless, through some unfortunate mistake, that you have been brought before this tribunal. Probably you were captured by the rebels while travelling, and forced by them to join their ranks."

Here the secretary rose, and the moment the president paused, addressed the court:

"Noble judges," he said, "the name of the son of the viceroy is sufficient to exonerate him from all suspicion. The Baron Ordoner Guldenlew cannot, by any possibility, be a rebel. Your president has explained sufficiently the false position in which he is placed. Let him be discharged. As prosecutor, I withdraw the charge against him; and I only regret that his dignity should have suffered by his being, for a moment, placed beside the arch-criminal Schumacker."

"What means this?" exclaimed Ordoner.

"The secretary, as public prosecutor, withdraws his charge against you," said the president.

"He is wrong," replied the young man, in a loud and clear voice. "I am the only one who should be charged, tried, or condemned; for," he added, in a low tone, "I alone am guilty."

"You alone guilty?" cried the president.

"You alone guilty?" repeated the secretary.

A new burst of surprise resounded through the hall. Ethel heard the words, and her heart sunk within her. She dreamed not that they were to save her

father; she listened to them only as the death-warrant of her lover.

"Ordoner Guldenlew," said the president, "explain yourself."

Ordoner remained silent for a moment, as if in deep thought; and then, looking up, in a calm and clear voice, he thus addressed the court:

"I am about to perform a sacred duty. I may sacrifice my life, and, perhaps, even my honor; but if I do so, it will be in a just cause, and I shall not regret it. Do not be surprised, seigniors judges, for there are mysteries which cannot be explained on this side the grave, but must remain to be solved by the Judge of heaven. Listen to what I am about to confess: mete out to me such punishment as you deem that I deserve, but spare these unfortunate and misguided men; and absolve the much-injured Schumacker, who, by his long captivity, has atoned already for all the crimes which were ever imputed to him. Yes, noble judges, I alone am guilty. Schumacker is innocent. These poor men have been led astray. I am the author of the insurrection of the miners."

"You!" exclaimed the president and his secretary, in amazement.

"Yes, I. And now, my lord, interrupt me no further, for I wish to terminate my painful duty of self-accusation, and exculpate these unfortunates as soon as possible. Yes! I stirred up the miners to revolt in the name of Schumacker. I supplied them with arms and money. I furnished them with the banners in his name through *my agent*, for Hacket was *my agent*."

At the name of Hacket, the secretary seemed stupefied with amazement.

"I will not further trespass upon your time," continued Ordoner. "I was taken in the ranks of the rebels, and I acknowledge that I was urging them on against the state. Thus I have exposed to you the real criminal, and hence you are bound to discharge Schumacker and these misguided men, who are accused of being his accomplices."

To all this Ethel listened with indescribable emotion. She perceived that her lover had come forward to lay down his life for her father; but her efforts to comprehend, or even to believe his declarations, were in vain.

Scarcely less bewildered, was the president himself; all his hopes were strangely overthrown, by a movement which he could not understand—he could not believe the evidence of his senses.

Nevertheless, he again addressed the son of the viceroy.

"If, as you say, you were indeed the instigator of this rebellion, you must have had some object. What was that object?"

"That question I refuse to answer," was the reply.

A deadly sickness came over Ethel when she heard the succeeding question of the president.

"Have you not had an intrigue with the daughter of the prisoner, Schumacker?"

But the next moment she saw her Ordoner, chained as he was, advance toward the tribunal, and exclaim in accents of lofty indignation:

"Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt, I have placed my life in your hands—let that content you! Spare the honor of a noble-minded and innocent girl. Do not a second time attempt to tarnish her good name!"

What was meant by those words '*a second time*,' upon which Ordoner dwelt with so much emphasis, the blushing Ethel did not understand; but, from the fury which raged in the looks of the chancellor, and rung out in his answer, it was easy to see that he but too well comprehended them.

"Ordoner Guldenlew!" he exclaimed, "forget not the respect due to those who are commissioned by the king, to administer the laws. I reprimand you in the name of this tribunal. I now again demand of you your reason for exciting this revolt."

"And I repeat, that upon that subject, I shall give you no answer."

"Was not your object to deliver Schumacker?" demanded the private secretary.

Ordoner deigned no reply.

"Prisoner," said the presiding judge, "your obstinacy will avail you nothing. There is evidence to show that you have lately been in communication with Schumacker; so that the confession that you have made of your guilt, rather tends to implicate than to exonerate him. You have often been to Monckholm, and in proof that it was for no purpose of ordinary curiosity, let these diamonds bear witness."

So saying, the judge took from a drawer near him a diamond buckle, which he held up, and asked:

"Did this ever belong to you?"

"Certainly," replied Ordoner; "by what chance——"

"Listen: one of the rebels, dying of his wounds, gave this to our private secretary, declaring that he had received it from you, in payment for rowing you over to Monckholm. Now I appeal to you, my fellow-judges, whether a gift of such value to a simple waterman, for such a service, does

not afford reason to believe that no small degree of importance was attached, by the prisoner, to his visit to Schumacker!"

"Ah!" cried Kennybol, "I recollect that buckle. May it please——"

"Silence!" cried the judge. "Ordoner Guldenlew, we await your answer."

"I do not deny that I wished to see Schumacker," replied Ordoner; "but you attach to the gift of this buckle, more importance than it deserves. It is forbidden, by the regulations, to wear jewelry within the royal prisons. During our passage across the gulf, this waterman had complained bitterly of his poverty and distress; so, as I was obliged to take out my buckle, I gave it to him."

"Pardon me, your excellency," interrupted the private secretary; "those regulations do not apply to the royal or vice-royal family, nor to a son of the viceroy."

"But I did not choose to declare myself," interrupted Ordoner.

"Why?" demanded the president.

"That I shall not explain," answered Ordoner.

"Your intercourse with Schumacker, proves sufficiently that you were plotting to deliver him."

"To deliver me!" cried Schumacker, who till now had listened to the proceedings, without giving any other evidence of attention, than an occasional gesture of impatience or contempt. "To deliver me! The whole object of this infernal game has been to destroy me, and it is so still. Do you suppose, that if Ordoner Guldenlew had not been taken fighting in the ranks of the rebels, he would ever have confessed what he has done? I see in all this the animosity to me which he inherited from his father, and as it regards his intercourse with me and my daughter, I can only say to him, as well as to all the rest, that my daughter joins with me, heart and soul, in my detestation of the whole race of Guldenlew, as well as that of d'Ahlefeldt."

Ordoner sighed deeply. Ethel, from the depths of her heart disclaimed her father's declaration, and the old man sunk back exhausted upon his seat.

"The tribunal must decide this question," said the president.

"My noble judges," said Ordoner, "I appeal to your consciences. Keep these few facts in mind. I alone am guilty; I confess it. Schumacker is innocent; and these poor men were led astray by my agent, *Hacket*. Upon these facts found your decision."

"His worship is right," added Kennybol. "It was he who was to prevail on

Hans of Iceland to join us. It was this young man who ventured alone to the cavern of Walderhog. He imparted his purpose to me in private the night before at Sarb. And as he says, we were deceived by that cursed Hacket, and therefore do not deserve death."

"Seignior private secretary," said the president, "the examination is closed. What conclusions do you draw from it?"

The secretary appeared somewhat at a loss, but after a few moment's delay, he arose, and with one hand in the folds of his band, and his eyes fixed intensely upon those of the president, he proceeded, in a slow and measured manner, step by step, as follows:

"Seignior President, and you my lords judges, I think it is clear that the indictment must be sustained. Ordoner Guldenlew has confessed his guilt. In so doing he has tarnished the noble name he bears, but he has failed to exculpate the other culprit, Schumacker. His connection with him is unexplained, and is strong presumptive evidence of their mutual guilt. The others have acknowledged that they were in arms against the state. I ask for the conviction of the six prisoners, as guilty of high treason and rebellion."

A murmur ran through the audience. The president arose to proclaim the closing of the session, when the bishop came forward, and craved a hearing in behalf of the prisoners.

"Learned judges," said the venerable prelate; "I have a few words to say in behalf of those whose cause I have undertaken. I could wish they had an abler advocate, for I am old and feeble; but may God strengthen the few words I am about to address to you. I am surprised at the conclusion the proceeding has arrived at, and astonished that the prosecutor should ask what he does at your hands. There is not a particle of evidence against my client, Schumacker; no connection is proved between him and the revolvers, except through this Hacket, who is not to be found, and who is acknowledged by Ordoner Guldenlew to have been exclusively *his agent*, and to have acted by his instructions, in making use of the name of Schumacker. He must, then, certainly, be acquitted. The other poor men, who were led away by the persuasion of those who should have known better, though guilty, I would still recommend to your mercy. For Ordoner Guldenlew, his crime is great; but he has confessed it—a circumstance which, in itself, would go far to obtain his pardon with God. In his case, my lords, I would call to your attention, the

fact of his youth, and the extreme liability of all men, and especially the young, to err, if not constantly supported from on high. His years are scarcely one fourth mine. Consider his inexperience and thoughtlessness; and if you can conscientiously avoid it, do not take from him that life which his Creator has lately given him, and which, if he be still permitted to enjoy it, he may better improve hereafter."

The old man ceased and sat himself down next Ordoner, who greeted him with a smile of gratitude; while the judges arose and betook themselves to their closet, for the purpose of deliberation.

While the decision which involved the fate of the six prisoners was pending, they remained seated upon the accused bench, which was guarded in front and rear by a double file of halberdiers.

Schumacker, with his head upon his breast, seemed lost in reverie. The giant looked about upon the assembled multitude with an air of stupid assurance. Kennybol and Jonas, with their hands clasped, and their eyes closed, from time to time muttered a prayer. Norbith preserved his haughty air, and shook his chains, as he changed his position, as if impatient of delay. Between him and the bishop sat Ordoner, with his arms folded and his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, thoughtful and grave, but calm and undismayed.

Some time passed away, during which the crowd, as well as the prisoners, were kept in anxious expectation, when the two halberdiers, who promenaded as sentinels before the door of the retiring-room, halted at a signal from within, and announced the reopening of the court. The door was opened, and the judges, with their president at their head, marched slowly in, and took their seats upon the bench.

The secretary prosecutor, who, during their absence, had appeared lost in thought, announced that the prisoners were ready to receive their sentence.

The judge on the right of the president then arose and said:

"The noble president of this tribunal, fatigued by the length of the session, has commissioned me, the high syndic of the province of Drontheim, to read the sentence of the court, as it has been agreed upon by the majority of the judges, to the which, being final and without appeal, I invite the silent attention of all present."

"In the name of his most gracious majesty, Christian IV., this tribunal, summoned to decide in the cases of John Schumacker, prisoner of state; Wilfred Kenny-

bol, mountaineer; Norbith, royal miner; Jonas, royal miner; Hans, of Klipstader, in Iceland; and Ordoner Guldenlew, Baron Thorvic, and chevalier of Dannebrog, accused of the crimes of high treason, conspiracy and revolt—Hans of Iceland being also charged with assassination, arson, and robbery, doth find,

"I. That John Schumacker is not guilty:

"II. That Kennybol, Norbith, and Jonas are guilty, but deserving of the clemency of the tribunal, having been deceived:

"III. That Hans of Iceland is guilty of all the crimes laid to his charge:

"IV. That Ordoner Guldenlew is guilty of high-treason and rebellion as principal, in the first degree.

The judge paused for a moment to take breath, and then proceeded with the sentence:

"John Schumacker, the court acquits you of this charge. You will be returned to your prison.

"Kennybol, Jonas and Norbith, the court commutes the penalty of death, which you have incurred, to perpetual imprisonment, and a fine of one thousand crowns each.

"Hans of Klipstader, assassin and incendiary, you are to be taken to your prison, and from thence, when the court shall appoint, to the place *d'armes* of Monckholm, and there hung by your neck until you are dead.

"Ordoner Guldenlew, traitor, after having been degraded from your rank and titles, in open court, you are to be taken to the place of execution, bearing a lighted torch in your hand, and there your head is to be struck from your body; your body burned, and the ashes thrown to the winds of heaven.

"Such is the sentence of this court."

Scarcely had these fatal words left the mouth of the judge, when a shriek was heard to ring through the vaulted hall, which pierced every ear and penetrated every heart.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MARRIAGE OF ORDONER.

It was night, and the son of the viceroy sat chained in his dungeon. His work was accomplished; the father of her he loved was saved, and he had nothing left but to die. The course he had marked out for himself, he had resolutely adhered to, with a full knowledge of the consequences, and a stern determination to brave them. And now, that those consequences in all their terrors stared him in the face;

now that he felt that every moment brought him nearer, and more near, to a death of ignominy and disgrace, he neither trembled at its approach, nor repented the step he had taken.

Lost in reverie, he was suddenly aroused by the turning of the key in the lock of his dungeon, which, together with the drawing of several rusty bolts, and the dropping of chains, announced, as he supposed, the coming of the executioner. The young man arose with calmness, and even cheerfulness. In putting aside, as he did, his mantle, he felt that he could with the same composure and indifference, lay down his life. He advanced to meet his visitor; but what was his amazement, when, instead of the grim and savage countenance of Orugix, he found confronting him a face of marble whiteness, though of more than mortal beauty; and a slender form which glided like an apparition, noiselessly over the threshold of his prison. Ordoner, for one moment, thought that the bitterness of death was past, and that he was already in the presence of the blessed. The next, he was folded in the embrace of his Ethel.

"Ordoner!" exclaimed the young girl, as soon as they recovered from the blissful trance, which for some moments had wrapped their senses in oblivion of their sorrows; "Ordoner! my Ordoner! I come to save you."

"To save me, dear Ethel!" replied Ordoner, with a smile: "Poor girl, you but deceive yourself! escape from these walls is impossible."

"I know it, Ordoner! I know it but too well! besides the jailers, the fortress is filled with soldiers, and a sentry is placed at every corner; but there are other means of safety, and those I bring you."

"Do not flatter yourself with such a hope, my Ethel; a few short hours at most, and the axe of the——"

"Stay, Ordoner, stay! do not conclude that fatal sentence, you shall not die. Save me from that dreadful thought, or rather, no! let me for a moment dwell upon it, to nerve me for the sacrifice I am called upon to make."

There was an expression of indescribable distress upon the young girl's features, which called forth all Ordoner's tenderness, as he folded her to his breast, and said:

"Sacrifice! my love, what mean you? what sacrifice can you make?"

She hid her face with her hand, her sobs impeded her utterance, and it was with difficulty that, in a broken voice, she ejaculated: "Oh! God help me!" but the

struggle was soon past, in a few moments her eyes were dried. With a tremendous effort, she overcame her emotion; she raised her head, and in a clear firm voice she said: "Ordoner, you must not, shall not die! you need not; promise but to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt, and your prison doors are open."

"Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt! do I hear your mouth pronounce that name, my Ethel? what is this?"

"Listen!" she continued, "and interrupt me not; I am sent here by the Countess d'Ahlefeldt. She assures me that your pardon shall be obtained from the king, if you will but promise to marry the daughter of the chancellor; she sent me here to exact that promise, and to save your life; she selected me to perform this duty, in the hope that you would listen more readily to me than to another. Let me not be deceived, my Ordoner; I release your vows, promise, swear to be her husband, and live."

"Ethel!" replied the condemned coldly, as he extricated himself from her embrace. "Farewell! and as you go, tell the executioner that I am ready."

Ethel followed him, and again clasped him to her bosom.

"What have I done, my Ordoner?" she exclaimed. Her lover's eyes were fixed upon the floor.

"Ordoner!" she repeated; "Ordoner, speak to me or I shall die."

For the first time a tear stood in Ordoner's eye.

"Ethel!" he replied, "you no longer love me."

"No longer love you!" she cried, wreathing her arms around him; "do you indeed say that? ah! you cannot believe it."

"You cannot love me, for you do not esteem me."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, before he repented them, for Ethel's emotion was heart-rending.

"Forgive me, my own best beloved Ordoner," she cried in broken accents, as her sobs permitted her utterance; "forgive me, and I will forgive your cruelty. Not love you! are you not my pride, my idol, my all of earthly good? Ah! did you but know what pangs it cost me to sacrifice myself to save you, you would spare these harsh reproaches."

"Be comforted, dearest," replied Ordoner, softened by her grief: he kissed away her tears, and then went on: "Could I believe you esteemed me, when you proposed to me to purchase my life by surrendering you? by breaking my solemn vows—by

tarnishing my fame by an act of cowardice and treachery?"

"Hear me my Ordoner," said Ethel with a deep sigh, "before you condemn me. I am but a poor weak girl; before the windows of our prison in the donjon, even now they are erecting the scaffold where your blood must flow; the horrid sound of the axe and saw had almost driven me mad. In vain I closed my eyes and stopped my ears, the fearful structure was ever present with me. The Countess d'Ahlefeldt came, she asked me if I would save you; she named the fatal terms. Oh! Ordoner, could I hesitate? Ought I to hesitate now to urge—ought you to hesitate to accept them? You must not, shall not die! No, Ordoner, marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt, and forget me—you can, you will. Far away in some gay city, the memory of our sorrows soon will cease, and you, with new ties and enjoyments, may yet happily pass your days. Think not of me, the fates forbid our union, but they do not yet demand your life."

"Ethel," replied the young man, "no more of this; we have no time to waste upon such weak and foolish dreams. Let no name but yours and mine, pass your lips."

"Alas! alas!" she cried, "but you will die!"

"I must: and oh! how much more gladly shall I go to the scaffold for you, than I should approach the altar with another! But speak of that no more, unless you would offend me."

"But to die a death of infamy!"

"Believe me, Ethel, there would be more infamy in the life which you propose, than in the death I am about to die."

At this moment, Ordoner's attention was attracted to an old man dressed in clerical attire, who stood in the shade, under the low vault of the door.

"What want you?" Ordoner demanded hastily.

"Seignior," replied the old man, "I accompanied the messenger of the Countess d'Ahlefeldt. You did not perceive me upon my entrance, and I was unwilling to interrupt you."

Ordoner had, indeed, observed no one but Ethel.

"I am also," he continued, "the minister to whom——"

"I understand!" interrupted Ordoner; "and I am ready."

"God is also ready to receive you, my son," replied the good man.

"Father," remarked Ordoner, "your face is familiar to me—we have met before."

The minister inclined his head:

"We have met before, my son," said he, "it was at the tower of Vyglä; and what there took place, conveys a useful lesson. You then promised me the pardon of a dozen prisoners. I doubted that you were jesting, not knowing who you were. Now it would seem that you said no more than you meant, and were able to perform. But still, at this day, though you are the son of the viceroy, you——"

He hesitated, and Ordoner finished the sentence:

"I cannot obtain pardon for myself! You are right, reverend father. My presumption led me to suppose I could command the future: it has been wisely checked."

The minister looked for a moment upon the ground, and said with solemnity:

"God alone is great!" and then raising his eyes, with fervor he exclaimed, "and He alone is good!"

"Listen to me, father!" said Ordoner, after a short silence: "the promise I gave you, at the tower of Vyglä, shall yet be made good. After my death, go you to Berghen, and say to my father, the viceroy of Norway, that his son's last request was, that the twelve condemned for whom you interest yourself, should be pardoned; he will grant the prayer."

A tear of tenderness glittered in the eye of the minister.

"My son," he said, "your heart cannot be evil, for with your last breath, you crave for others the pardon which you reject with generous courage for yourself. I overheard your refusal and though inordinate affection be a sin, I could not but admire your constancy. And even now, I am constrained to ask myself, *unde scelus*, how can one filled with such noble and generous feelings, commit the crimes you have confessed?"

"My father, not even to the girl of my heart have I explained my circumstances; and I cannot do so to you. Believe me, in this, however, I shall not suffer for any crime."

"How? I entreat you, my son, explain yourself!"

"I cannot," replied Ordoner firmly. "My secret must go with me to the tomb."

"This man cannot be guilty," murmured the minister to himself. Then drawing from his bosom a crucifix of ebony, he placed it upon a rude altar of granite attached to the wall of the prison. Before the crucifix he placed a lamp, and an open Bible, and then addressed himself to Ordoner:

"My son," he said, "read, meditate,

and pray. In due season I will return to you. Come," said he to Ethel, who, during this conversation, had clung in silence to her lover, "come, let us leave the prisoner with his God. His time on earth is passing rapidly away."

The young girl raised her head; her countenance was radiant with joy. A heavenly light seemed to have newly broken in upon her:

"Seignior minister," she replied; "not yet. Before you go, unite Ethel Schumacker with her husband, Ordoner Guldenlew." She looked upon her lover. "Yes," she continued, "were you free, happy and powerful, I should shudder to link my fatal destiny with yours. But now, a captive in chains, and ready to die, you need no longer dread the contagion of my misfortunes. Ordoner, my lord and husband, permit her who was unworthy to be your companion in life, to be your companion in death. You love me too much. I trust, to think for a moment that I could survive you."

The heart of the condemned was too full to permit him to answer by words.

"You, old man," continued Ethel, "shall be to us in place of family and friends. This dungeon shall be our temple—this stone our altar. Here is my ring; see, we are upon our knees before God and before you. Bless us, and pronounce the holy words, which shall unite Ethel Schumacker to Ordoner Guldenlew, her lord."

They kneeled before the preacher, who regarded them with looks of mingled pity and surprise.

"How, my children!" he exclaimed: "What would you?"

"Father," replied the young girl, "the time is short; God and death await us."

Who has not experienced at times a sudden emotion, which impels him, as if by superhuman force, to act in despite of reason or reflection. The preacher raised his eyes to Heaven:

"May God pardon me if I do amiss," he said. "But you love each other, and your time for love on earth is short. Let then that love be sanctified by the holy ordinance."

The sweet and solemn ceremony was performed; and with the blessing of the good old man, the young couple arose a wedded pair.

An indescribable expression of mingled joy and wo, pervaded the features of Ordoner. The countenance of his bride was flushed with a modest exultation. She felt that she had triumphed over every earthly sorrow.

"Ordoner, my love," she said; "is it not well that we are about to die, since life would only separate us? Do you know what I propose to do? I shall place myself at the window of the donjon, when you mount the scaffold, that we may ascend to Heaven together. If, as I doubt not, I expire before the axe has fallen, my spirit shall await you in the air—for we are wedded—and shall live, though the tomb this night shall be our bridal chamber."

"Ethel, you are mine!" was all that Ordoner could utter, and these words comprised all that was of value to him in existence.

"My children," said the chaplain in a broken voice, "'tis time to say farewell."

"Adieu! Ordoner, my lord, my best beloved!" said Ethel, after a long and fond embrace; "we meet no more in life—bless me my husband!"

With difficulty, the prisoner accomplished the wish of the kneeling girl; he tore himself away, and found the chaplain also on his knees before him.

"What would you further?" he exclaimed.

"Bless me, too, my son!"

"May Heaven bless you!" ejaculated the young man, "and afford you those mercies and consolations, which you call down upon the heads of your sinful and unhappy fellow-men!"

The dungeon walls reëchoed back the last kisses and adieus. The gates creaked upon their rusty hinges, and the iron door closed with sullen clang, between two newly united souls, who had parted to meet again in eternity!

CHAPTER XL.

WHO SHALL HAVE THE HEAD-MONEY? HANS OF ICELAND APPEARS IN COURT.

"BARON VAUTHCEN, colonel of the arquebussiers of Monckholm, which of your soldiers captured the brigand, Hans of Iceland, at the battle of the Black Pillar? Name him, that he may receive the reward of a thousand crowns, which was offered for the head of the felon."

Thus spoke the president of the high tribunal, which had been called together again, according to the ancient custom of Norway, which prohibits a court, without appeal, from adjourning finally, until the sentences it has pronounced have been executed. Before them was the giant, with the cord hanging from his neck, from which he was, in turn, soon himself to be hanging.

The colonel, who was seated at the table beside the private secretary, arose, saluted the tribunal, and answered:

"Seigniors judges, the soldier who took Hans of Iceland, is in this presence. He is called Toric Belfast, and holds the post of second arquebussier of my regiment."

"Let him stand forth then," said the president, "and claim his reward."

A young soldier in the Monckholm uniform, presented himself at the bar.

"You are Toric Belfast?" said the president.

"I am, your grace."

"Did you capture Hans of Iceland?"

"By the aid of Saint Beelzebub, I did, your grace."

A heavy bag of money was placed before the president.

"You recognize this man," he continued, designating the giant, "as Hans of Iceland?"

"I am not quite so intimate with Hans of Iceland, as with my sweetheart, may it please your excellency; but I will take upon me to say, that if there is any such person, that big devil is he."

"Toric Belfast," said the president, "I here present you with the thousand royal crowns, offered by the high syndic, as the price of the felon's head."

The soldier advanced, eagerly, to take the money, when a harsh voice was heard from the crowd, which cried, in a sarcastic tone:

"Soldier of Monckholm, you never yet took Hans of Iceland."

"By all the devils!" exclaimed the soldier, "I have no other earthly possession but my pipe and these crowns that I have earned; but I'll give the whole to that man, if he will prove what he says!" He crossed his arms, and facing the crowd, cried out: "Now, whoever spoke, let him show himself."

"Here I am," said a man of low stature, who thrust aside those who surrounded him, and coming forward, confronted the soldier.

The stranger was distinguished by his fiery eyes and revolting features; long black locks hung over his sullen brow—a thick black beard fell upon his breast, and his person was covered by a mantle of skins.

"Ah! it is you, is it?" said the soldier, with an insolent stare. "And who do you say did take him, then, my handsome young gentleman?"

The unknown shook his head menacingly, and, with an indignant sneer, repeated, "It is I."

At this moment, the Baron Vauthæn thought he recognized his mysterious informant at Skongen; the Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt, his host at the ruins of Arbar; the private secretary, the peasant of Ælma: but they were separated, and neither could communicate to the other his private thoughts.

"It is you, is it?" repeated the soldier. "Now I look again, I think I recollect you. You are the strange fellow, whose insolence I would have chastised at the spladgest some fortnight since, the night Gill Stadt, the miner, was found dead."

"Gill Stadt!" growled the unknown, with the voice of a savage beast.

"Yes, Gill Stadt, the lover of my comrade's sweetheart, for whose sake he lost his life like a fool," said the soldier, with an air of indifference.

"Was there not also, at the spladgest, the body of one of your officers?" muttered the unknown.

"Yes; the body of Captain Dispolsen. I recollect I stayed to examine it, and was arrested for my late return to the fort."

At the name of Dispolsen, the secretary started.

"May it please the president," he observed, "these two individuals are consuming the time of the court; let them be stopped."

"Just as the court please," said the soldier; "only I claim the thousand crowns, for I did take this Hans prisoner."

"You are a liar!" exclaimed the unknown.

"It is well for you, my old joker, that we are in the presence of the court," replied the soldier, placing his hand upon his sword.

"The reward belongs to me," observed the other, coolly; "for without me, Hans of Iceland would never have been taken."

The soldier, exasperated at the tenacity of his opponent, swore by all the devils, that he himself took Hans of Iceland on the field of battle.

"But you never would have taken him, unless I had first struck him down," retorted the other; "and hence the prize belongs to me."

"'Tis false! he was struck down by the fiend, in shape of a beast."

"That was me!"

"Never! never!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the president.

"Colonel Vauthæn, I ask you again, did Toric Belfast take the brigand prisoner?"

"He did," replied the colonel.

"Soldier, the reward is yours," said the president.

The soldier stretched forth his hand to take it.

"Stop!" cried the unknown, grinding his teeth. "Lord president, this sum belongs, you say, to him who took Hans of Iceland!"

"It does."

The unknown turned toward the giant. "That is not Hans of Iceland," said he.

A murmur of astonishment ran through the room, and the president and his secretary twisted uneasily upon their seats.

"No!" reiterated the unknown; "the reward does not belong to that cursed arquebussier of Monckholm, for that man is not Hans of Iceland."

"Halberdiers," exclaimed the president, "remove that madman from the court."

"Not so, if it please your grace, interposed the bishop; by refusing to hear this man, and to investigate this question of identity, you deprive the prisoner of a chance whereby his life may be preserved. I demand that he be confronted with this stranger."

"Reverend bishop," replied the president, "you shall be satisfied;" and then addressing the giant, he said: "You have acknowledged that you are Hans of Iceland; do you still adhere to that acknowledgment?"

"I do!" replied the giant.

"You see, reverend sir," observed the president.

"You lie! mountaineer of Keole!" cried the unknown, at the same moment. "Do not persist in sustaining a name which will crush you; recollect it has cost you a deal already."

The giant exchanged a look with the private secretary, and repeated,

"I am Hans of Klipstader, in Iceland!"

The unknown approached the arquebussier of Monckholm, who had listened to this controversy with intense attention.

"Mountaineer of Keole!" he cried, "'tis known that Hans of Iceland is a blood-drinker. If you are he, drink it now!"

With the quickness of thought, he threw off his mantle of skins, plunged his knife in the heart of the soldier, and seizing the already lifeless body in his nervous arms, he dashed it at the feet of the giant.

A cry of horror and consternation burst from the throng; even the soldiers recoiled in affright, when the stranger, displaying himself in all his hideousness, and springing upon the giant like a thunderbolt, buried his weapon in his bosom; then lifting the steel, red with a double murder, high above his head, he yelled:

"Now, judges! where is Hans of Iceland now?"

"Guards, seize the monster!" cried the president, in terror.

He threw away his poniard.

"I have no further need of it," there are no more soldiers of Monckholm here to slay!"

The archers and halberdiers approached him with as much form and caution as they would have done a fortified city to besiege it; but he made no resistance, and submitted quietly to be chained, while his two last victims, one of whom was still breathing, were borne away upon litters.

The confusion and tumult caused by these awful events, it would be useless to attempt to describe; but no sooner had the monster taken his place at the criminal dock, then all were hushed, and the whole audience bound, as if by a spell, in breathless attention.

The bishop was the first to rise.

"My lords," he began.

The brigand interrupted him:

"Bishop of Drontheim," he said, "I am Hans of Iceland! spare yourself the trouble of defending me."

The secretary next arose.

"Noble president!" he commenced.

The monster cut him short:

"Secretary prosecutor," he repeated, "I am Hans of Iceland! there is no need of an indictment!" and then, with his feet dabbling in the blood he had shed, he glared upon the court, the soldiers, and the people, with a look, at once so ferocious and so malignant, that the boldest among them quailed to meet his eye, disarmed though he was and loaded down with chains.

"Listen, judges!" he began, "for I will be brief. I am Hans, the demon of Klipstader; old Iceland is my mother—that island of volcanoes and subterranean fires. Once she was one vast mountain; but a giant, hurled from heaven, fell upon her, and crushed her. Of myself I need not speak to you, for my fame is known. I am the descendant of Ingolphe, the exterminator; his soul animates my mortal frame; murder, and burning has been my occupation. I have, myself, committed more crimes than you ever pronounced unjust sentences in your lives. Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt, I know all the vile secrets which you hide in your heart. Men, I could drink all your blood with pleasure; my nature is enmity to the human race; my mission is to destroy mankind. Colonel of the arquebussiers of Monckholm, it was I who gave you information of the passage of the miners through the defile of

the Black Pillar; I did so that you might destroy them. It was I, also, who hurled down rocks from the mountain-top, and crushed a whole battalion of your troops; I did it to avenge my son. Judges, I come here voluntarily, to seek for death; the soul of Ingolphe, which I have borne so long is too heavy for me; my son is dead; I have drank blood enough; my thirst is quenched. I give myself up to you, and now you may drink mine."

He was silent, and a murmur of horror resounded through the hall.

The bishop then addressed him: "My son," said the venerable old man, "to what end have you committed these fearful crimes?"

The brigand laughed. "Upon my faith, reverend sir," said he, "I did not commit them like your brother of Borghlam, for the purpose of enriching myself.* No, I was moved thereto by my natural inclination."

"The spirit of God dwells not always in his ministers," replied the good old man, with humility; "but, my son, why should you insult my calling, when my only object is to do you good?"

"Nonsense, your reverence; you had better ask that of your brother of Schaholt, who brought me up, and whose palace I burned over his head. By Ingolphe, 't is strange! I'm the pet of the bishops; one presided over my cradle, another would do the same over my dying hour. Bishop, you are a fool."

"My son, do you believe in God?"

"Why not? Do I not blaspheme his name?"

"Cease, unhappy man, your hours are numbered! Will you not throw yourself at the feet of your Saviour?"

Hans shrugged his shoulders; his answer was too blasphemous to be repeated.

The kind-hearted bishop sunk back in horror into his seat.

"Come, judges," continued Hans, "what means this delay? If it were my part to sentence you to death, I should not keep you long in waiting."

The tribunal retired for a few moments, and upon their return, the president pronounced the sentence, which was, "that Hans of Iceland be hung by the neck till dead."

"Why, that will do," remarked the brigand. "Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt," he continued, "it would be easy for me to obtain the like favor for you, but I will not. Live on, for you are the enemy of man; and I leave you as a legacy of my hatred to the

human race. For me, I'm provided against going to Nysthim, at least."

The secretary ordered the guards to convey Hans to the donjon of the Lion of Slæsvig, until a dungeon could be provided for him in the quarters of the regiment of Monckholm.

"In the quarters of the regiment of Monckholm!" murmured the monster, in a tone of malignant exultation.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE RETURN OF SPIAGUDRY.

BEFORE the dawn of the day which succeeded the night when Ordoner received his sentence, and indeed, about that very hour; the newly appointed keeper of the spladgest of Drontheim, was aroused from his mattress by a knocking at the gate, which caused the gloomy halls of that sombre edifice to resound. The official, who was no other than our old acquaintance, the Laplander Oglypiglap, cursed the damp and chilly atmosphere of the dead-house, as, lamp in hand, he left his comfortable nest, and hurried to admit his unseasonable visitors.

They were fishermen of the lake of Sparbo, who brought, extended on a litter covered with rushes and sea-weed, the body of a man which they had hauled up in their net, from the dark and gloomy waters which laved the foot of Ælmaæ. They deposited their burden in the interior of the funeral edifice, and after receiving from Oglypiglap an acknowledgment, which would enable them to obtain their legal fee, departed, and left the keeper alone with the dead.

Without further delay, Oglypiglap proceeded to examine the body, which was at once remarkable for its extreme length and meagerness. The first object which attracted his attention, after removing his covering, was an enormous periwig.

"I've had hold of this before now!" exclaimed the keeper; "yes, I know it by its outlandish make; it belonged to that French dandy—— But what's this? here are the boots, which the poor postillion Cramner had on, when his horse fell and broke his neck; and here's the black suit in which Professor Synggrantax drowned himself! Who the devil can this be, that has run away with the spoils of so many of my old acquaintances?"

He examined the face, closely, by the light of his lamp, in vain. Already decomposed, the features had lost their shape, and the skin its color. He fumbled in the pock-

* The bishop of Borghlam was said to have been the head of a band of pirates and murderers.

ets, and drew out some strips of parchment covered with writing and figures, half-obliterated by water and slime. These he cleaned carefully, and with no small difficulty, succeeded in deciphering a few disconnected words and sentences; they ran as follows:

"Rudbeck—Saxon grammarian—Bishop of Holm Arngrim—in Norway, two counties Lævig and Sarlsberg, one barony—silver is only found in the mines of Kongsberg, loadstone and asbestos at Sund Mør—amethyst at Guldenbranshal—chalcidony, agate, and jasper, at the isles of Farær—at Nonkahiva, in time of famine, men eat their wives and children—Thor-modus Thorfeus; Islæf, Bishop of Schalholdt, first historian of Iceland—Mercury played at draughts with the moon, and won the time of day—Mæhlstrom whirlpool—*Hernando Hirudo*—Cicero—economy—glory—Frode le Savant: Odin, consulted the head of Minder the wise—&c., &c."

"If I may believe my eyes!" cried the keeper, dropping the parchment; "this is the handwriting of my old master, Benignus Spiagudry!" and then again examining the body, he recognized the long, lean hands, scattered gray hair, and the general outline of the unfortunate departed.

"They were not so much out of the way, after all," soliloquized the keeper, "who said that the devil flew away with him! he has taken him off to drown him. But it is queer enough, after all, that Doctor Spiagudry, who has received and lodged so many dead in this very house, should at last come here to be taken care of himself."

Thus saying, the Lapland philosopher raised the body to carry it into the interior, when he perceived that some heavy substance was attached to the neck of the unhappy Spiagudry by a cord.

"Ah!" he cried; "here's the stone the devil tied about his neck to drown him with!" but upon examination, he found he was mistaken—it was a casket of steel, secured by a large clasp, upon which was engraved armorial bearings.

"This must go to the bishop!" said the Laplander, to himself; "doubtless there is witchcraft in it, for this man was a sorcerer and a magician. Who knows but the devil himself is shut up here? I would not open it for the world."

So saying, he deposited the body upon one of the granite couches, and hurried with the casket to the bishop, praying fervently by the way for protection against the fiend, whom he doubted not he carried in his hand.

CHAPTER XLII

THE MAN-HATER AND THE MAN-EATER.

HANS of Iceland, it will be recollected, had been conveyed, by the direction of the private secretary, to the donjon of the Lion of Slæsvig, the prison of Schumacker, and for the time, they were both shut up in the same apartment.

The ex-chancellor was striding up and down the room, immersed in bitter reflections. The brigand stood quietly in his chains, sneering at his guards. Schumacker at length approached him.

"Who are you?" said he.

"If I tell you my name, it will freeze your blood with horror. I am Hans of Iceland."

Schumacker held out his hand. "Take it," said he.

"For what? Do you wish me to devour it?"

"Hans of Iceland, I like you," said the ex-chancellor; "you hate mankind."

"And for that reason, I hate you," replied the brigand.

"Hear me; I *hate* men because they have returned me evil for good."

"So do not I. I hate them because they have returned me good for evil."

Schumacker was startled; he recoiled in horror from the monster. His misanthropy was of a different mould; but he went on:

"I have reason to hate my kind. They are false, cruel, and ungrateful. To them I owe all my sorrows."

"So much the better. I owe them all my enjoyment."

"What enjoyment?"

"That of shedding their blood; of hewing them to pieces with my axe; of tearing their flesh with my fangs; and of crushing their bones with rocks. Those are my enjoyments; and those I owe to men."

The pride with which Schumacker had first greeted the monster as a companion in misfortune and misanthropy, turned to shame and disgust; he covered his face with his hands, and tears of indignation coursed down his aged cheeks—of indignation no longer against the world, but against himself. His great and noble heart revolted against the malignity he had so long cherished, when he saw it reflected back as from a mirror, in tenfold deformity, from the soul of Hans of Iceland.

"Well!" cried the monster with a horrid laugh; "well, enemy of man! will you still vaunt companionship with me?"

"Never!" replied the old man, shuddering at the thought.

The guards soon arrived, to convey Hans to a securer place of detention, and Schumacker was left alone to dream, but to hate mankind no longer.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE HOUR OF DOOM—OUT OF DEATH COMES LIFE.

THE fatal hour had arrived. The last sun which was to shine on Ordoner had arisen. In the court-yard of the donjon appeared the scaffold, hung with black, which, like some deadly exhalation, seemed to have sprung from the earth in the hours of darkness. Upon the topmost beam, in letters of blood, was written, *Ordoner Guldenlew, Traitor*. Below, was a sea of heads, hemmed in on all sides by the halberds and bayonets of the soldiery, whose files were doubled, and who guarded every avenue; over the water came the distant hum of the city, above which was heard the heavy tolling of the great cathedral bell. The gulf swarmed with boats, which brought their thousands of witnesses to the scene of death.

Within, the tribunal was opened, and the last act of ignominy which was to precede the execution, was ready to be consummated. Commanding the prisoner (who, calm and undismayed, already confronted his destroyers,) to kneel, the president proceeded to read from the book of the knightly order of Dannebrog, the following ordinance:

"Albeit, it would seem impossible that any one who shall be deemed worthy of the investiture of this high and honorable order of chivalry, should forfeit his honor by the commission of any deadly crime against the state or church, yet should such unhappy event, in the providence of God be permitted to occur, it is

Ordered, That if any chevalier of this noble order shall deliver his soul to the power of the fiend, by the commission of any act of felony or treason, and shall be thereof convicted in any court of justice, that such chevalier shall in such court be publicly degraded, and expelled from the royal and noble order of Dannebrog."

The president shut the book, and addressed the prisoner:

"Ordoner Guldenlew, you have been convicted, upon your own confession, of high treason, and sentenced by this court to be beheaded, your body burned, and your ashes given to the winds of heaven.

Ordoner Guldenlew, traitor, you have rendered yourself unworthy of the rank you hold among the honorable chevaliers of the order of Dannebrog, and I now proceed, in accordance with the laws of that order, to degrade you from that rank."

The president had already opened the book, from which he was about to read the fatal formula of degradation, when a keeper entered the court, and announced the bishop of Drontheim.

It was, indeed, the venerable prelate, who entered with hurried step, supported by another ecclesiastic.

"Stay! stay your proceedings, noble president," he cried, with a force of which his years seemed incapable. "Heaven be praised, I am not too late!"

A strong sensation was perceptible among the audience, but the president, with some impatience, replied:

"Allow me to inform your reverence, that your interruption is ill timed. The court is now in the act of degrading from his rank, the criminal who is about to undergo the punishment of death."

"Beware! my lord, beware! Stay your hand; he is innocent before Heaven and man."

The excitement caused by this announcement burst all bounds of restraint. A cry, a shout of mingled emotions, arose at once from every quarter.

"Yes, tremble, judges!" continued the bishop, before the president had succeeded in recovering his presence of mind; "tremble, for you are upon the eve of shedding innocent blood."

During this period of confusion, Ordoner himself had lost his composure; his countenance became troubled, for he feared that new and irresistible proofs of Schumacker's guilt had been discovered, and that his generous self-sacrifice had been in vain.

The president, at last, succeeded in making himself heard. "My lord bishop," he observed, "do you bear in mind the circumstances attending this affair? I fear you deceive yourself, in supposing there is any error. If Ordoner Guldenlew is not the guilty person, who then is?"

"Your grace shall know," replied the bishop, as he ascended the tribunal, and handed to the president a casket of steel. "My lords, you have decided in the dark; the contents of this casket will throw a light on this subject which will astonish you."

The president and his private secretary both seemed astounded.

The bishop proceeded:

"My lords, as I was retiring this morning to pray for the souls of the condemned, and then to seek some rest after the fatigues of the night, the keeper of the spladgest brought me this box, which he had found upon the body of his predecessor, Benignus Spiagudry; thinking that it inclosed some satanic mystery, as its deceased possessor was one of evil report among the ignorant and superstitious, and had lately been found drowned in the lake of Sparbo."

Here Ordoner listened with eager attention. The audience was still as death, and the president and secretary, by their downcast looks, seemed as if they should have changed places with the condemned.

"After having blessed the casket," continued the bishop, "I opened it. It bears the arms, as you will see, of Schumacker, Count Griffenfeldt.

"It did, indeed, contain a satanic mystery, as you shall hear, my noble lords: give it your earnest attention, I beseech you; for upon it depends the shedding of blood, for every drop of which, you are accountable to God!"

He drew from the casket, a roll of parchment, upon which were endorsed the following words:

"I, Blaxtun Cambysulsum, doctor, being about to die, have placed in the hands of Captain Dispolsen, the agent at Copenhagen, of Schumacker, formerly Count Griffenfeldt, the within project, drawn up wholly by the hand of Turiaf Mnsdamon, the confidential servant of the chancellor, Count d'Ahlefeldt, in order that he, Captain Dispolsen, may make such use of it, as shall seem most desirable. And I pray God to pardon all my crimes. Dated at Copenhagen, this eleventh day of January, 1691. "CAMBYSULSUM."

The private secretary trembled, and strove to speak, but was not able. The bishop, when he had finished the endorsement, handed the parchment to the president, who was also greatly agitated, and requested him to read its contents to the court.

"What do I see?" exclaimed the president, as he opened the parchment: "Memorial to the most noble, the Count d'Ahlefeldt, upon the means by which Schumacker may be put to death by process of law! I swear to you, most reverend bishop—"

"Read it! read it, my lord!" cried the bishop; "I doubt not that your wicked confidant has abused your name as he has that of the unhappy Schumacker. But see

the consequences of your animosity toward your fallen predecessor. Your execrable secretary has plotted the destruction of an innocent man, thinking thereby to acquire your favor."

The certainty that the bishop, who was acquainted with the contents of the casket, did not suspect his complicity, had a tendency to reassure the president. Ordoner also, breathed freer; he began to think that the innocence of Ethel's father, and his own, might be made manifest at the same time; nor could he avoid wondering at the strange chance, by which it appeared that this casket, to recover which he had set out to encounter a demon, was always at hand upon the person of his follower; and might, in some sense, be said to have followed him, while he followed it.

The president, who had entirely recovered his composure, then proceeded to read, with the strongest marks of indignation, in which he was heartily joined by his auditors, the plan which Musdamon had drawn out, and the fulfillment of which, in all its abominable detail, we have portrayed in the preceding pages of this history. The secretary listened in the greatest agitation, and made frequent attempts to rise for explanation, which were at once frowned down, by both the court and the people.

"Halberdiers, seize that man," exclaimed the president, when he had finished. The wretch, without uttering a word, was seized, bound, and cast into the criminal dock, amid the hooting and execration of the people.

"Seigniors judges," exclaimed the bishop, "rejoice with trembling! The truth which has now been revealed to you, is about to receive additional testimony from the mouth of my worthy brother, Athunasius Munder, the chaplain of the prison."

It was Athunasius who had accompanied the bishop upon his entrance, and who now, after bowing humbly to the tribunal, proceeded as follows:

"My lords, I spent the first hours of the morning in the dungeon of the son of the viceroy. I left him, persuaded of his innocence, notwithstanding that your lordships had condemned him. While I besought Heaven, that, if consistent with its high decree, that innocence might yet be made manifest, one came to me from the giant mountaineer, who had been smitten unto death; and craved the consolations of religion ere he departed to his final account. In accordance with my duty, I went to him, and, as if in answer to my prayer, listen to what, with his latest breath, he confided to me:"

"I am not Hans of Iceland," said the dying man, "though I have lost my life in adhering to the name. I was paid to play the part, and promised deliverance in the end, by the private secretary of the chancellor. He it was, that, under the name of Hacket, conducted the whole revolt, and he, I believe, alone is guilty. After this, he asked and received my blessing, and I have hurried hither to save the shedding of innocent blood." He ceased.

"Do you not remember, my lord," asked the bishop, "that my unhappy clients insisted upon the resemblance between Hacket and your private secretary?"

"Turiaf Musdamon," demanded the president of the new prisoner, "what have you to say to this charge?"

Musdamon cast upon his master a look of mingled apprehension and inquiry, and after a moment's pause, replied:

"Nothing, my lord."

The president continued, in a faltering tone, "You then confess yourself guilty of plotting against the state, and an individual, called John Schumacker?"

"I do, my lord," replied Musdamon; whose confidence arose, as he perceived the agitation of the president.

"Let him be asked, my lord," said the bishop, "if he had any accomplices, in this affair."

"Accomplices!" repeated Musdamon.

The president hesitated, and was silent; his agitation was almost irrepressible. He cast one look of deep meaning upon Musdamon; a horrible struggle seemed to be going on within the breast of the secretary: but he caught the expression of his master's eye, and all was calm. With a firm and clear voice, he answered: "No, my lord bishop, I had no accomplices; your lordship conjectured rightly, at first: in hopes to gain my master's favor, I contrived this plot, without his knowledge, to ruin his enemy."

The president's brow became calm, and betokened almost exultation; still he stealthily exchanged an encouraging glance with his secretary.

The bishop continued: "Your lordship will perceive, then, as Turiaf Musdamon has no accomplice, that Ordoner Guldenlew, must be innocent."

"Why then should he have confessed his guilt? Why did that miserable mountaineer persist in claiming to be Hans of Iceland? God alone knows our secret motives."

But Ordoner deemed it no longer necessary to defer his explanation. "Judges,"

he said, "I am innocent. I accused myself, because I saw no other means of saving the life of the unfortunate Schumacker, whose child would have been left an orphan."

The chancellor bit his lips.

"We demand of the tribunal," said the bishop, "the acquittal of Ordoner Guldenlew, and the restoration of his honors."

The tribunal again retired, but in a few moments returned, and the president pronounced the acquittal of Ordoner, with every honor, and the condemnation of Turiaf Musdamon to death.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HANS OF ICELAND ENGAGES IN TRAFFIC.

THE regiment of Monckholm, or such portion of it as survived the battle of the Black Pillar, were quartered in a huge tower, which stood by itself, in the main court of the fortress. At night, they were mustered within the tower, with the exception of the sentinels on duty. The gates were barricaded from without; when the men had retired to rest, they occupied the upper part of the building, which was accessible only by a narrow stairway; the lower story contained the prisons of Hans of Iceland and Musdamon.

Hans lay chained upon the floor of his dungeon, with his head upon a stone by way of a pillow; a feeble light penetrated through the grating of his prison door, and through this opening also, he could hear his guards, as they laughed, and sang, and drank, and threw dice upon a drum-head. The monster, by the working of his features and the grinding of his teeth, was evidently meditating some design of fearful import; at last he called aloud.

"What do you want?" asked a turnkey, whose visage appeared at the grate.

Hans arose. "Comrade," said he, "I am cold; this floor is hard and damp; let me have some fire and a bundle of straw."

"Well," replied the other, "that is but fair. A poor devil who is to be hung to-morrow, is entitled to one good night's rest. I'll go and get them; you have money, I suppose?"

"No," replied the monster.

"What!" said the other, "is it possible? You, the most famous brigand of Norway and the north, and have not saved a handful of ducats!"

"No," repeated Hans.

"Not a few crowns, even?"

"No, I tell you, nothing of the sort."

"Not even a few shillings?"

"Not enough to buy the skin of a rat, or the soul of a man."

"That alters the case, then," remarked the turnkey. "What is the use of your complaining? you'll have a harder and a colder bed to-morrow; and yet you'll never grumble at it, I'll be bound." So saying, the turnkey retired, heedless of the curses of the monster, who continued to rattle his chains, which might at intervals be heard to break, link by link.

Soon the door opened, and a tall man, clad in red serge, entered, bearing a dark-lantern; he was accompanied by the turnkey, who had refused the monster's prayer. Hans was quiet.

"Hans of Iceland," said the man in red, "I am Nychol Orugix, executioner of the province of Drontheim; and to-morrow I am to have the honor of hanging your excellency upon a bran-new gallows, in the city-market place."

"Are you sure of that?" asked the brigand, in reply.

"I wish you were as sure to mount by Jacob's ladder to heaven, as you are to mount the gallows by mine," returned Nychol.

"Indeed!" said the monster, with a malicious sneer.

"Yes, seignior brigand, I've already told you that I am the executioner of the province."

"Well, if I were not Hans of Iceland, I should prefer to be you."

"I'm sorry I cannot return the compliment," said Nychol, rubbing his hands with complacency, "though you are a man of taste, my friend. Ours is a very pleasant and respectable calling. There's the hand that has weighed many a head without the body."

"Have you ever drank blood?" asked the brigand.

"No," replied the other, "but I have often given the torture."

"Did you ever devour the entrails of the living?"

"No, but I have crushed their bones in a vice of steel; I have broken their limbs upon the wheel; I have sawed their limbs asunder with a saw; torn their flesh with red-hot pincers; and burned the blood in their veins with melted lead and boiling oil!"

"Ah!" replied the monster, with a pensive air, "you have had your pleasures."

"And let me say, though you are Hans of Iceland, I believe as many souls have taken their departure from under my hands as from under yours, without count-

ing the one you yourself will render up to-morrow."

"Provided, always, that I have a soul," replied the monster, with a sneer. "But tell me, executioner of Drontheim, do you suppose if you were to set free the spirit of Ingolphe from the body of Hans of Iceland, that your soul could escape its grasp?"

The executioner laughed. "We'll see to-morrow," he replied.

"Yes," returned the monster, "we shall see to-morrow."

"But," continued the other, "it was not souls, but bodies, that I came here to talk about. Your body *rightfully* belongs to me, but the law gives you the privilege of setting a price upon it. Tell me, what will you take for it?"

"What will I take for my body?" repeated the brigand.

"Yes; how much? Be reasonable now."

Hans turned to the jailer. "Comrade," said he, "how much do you want for the bundle of straw, and the fuel I asked you for just now?"

The jailer reflected a moment, and then answered: "Two ducats of gold."

"Very well. Hangman, give me two golden ducats for my body."

"Two golden ducats!" cried the executioner, "Oh, that is horribly dear! Two ducats for your ugly carcass! I'll never pay it in the world!"

"Then you won't have the body," replied the other quietly.

"Then you shall be thrown to the dogs, instead of ornamenting the museum of Copenhagen, or the cabinet of curiosities at Berghen."

"What do I care for that?"

"But just think of it. If you sell your body to me, I shall have the bones nicely cleaned, polished, and strung together with brass wires; then you will be put in a fine glass case, and dusted clean every morning; then all the world will come to see you, for ages after you are dead, and they will say, 'there is the skeleton of the famous Hans of Iceland.' But suppose we do not trade; the best you can hope is to rot in some common charnel-house; but most probably, you will be cast out to be devoured by the dogs, and birds of prey."

"Well, I shall be no worse off than living men are. They are constantly preyed upon and destroyed by each other."

"But two ducats of gold! that is too exorbitant, my dear fellow! You must come down a little, or we never can trade."

"This is the first time I ever undertook to trade, and it will probably be the last;

so I am determined to make a good bargain."

"Bear in mind, now, that I shall have the opportunity of making you sorry for this. To-morrow you will be in my power."

"Do you think so?" asked Hans, with a sarcastic air, which the other did not observe.

"Yes. And you will do well to recollect, that there are different ways of fixing a running knot. Come, be reasonable now, and I'll hang you all the easier for it."

"What! do you suppose I care how you hang me?" said the monster with a laugh.

"Will not two crowns answer your purpose? What do you want of the money?"

"Ask your comrade there. He wants two ducats for straw and a fire."

"By the soul of St. Joseph the carpenter!" exclaimed the executioner, turning angrily to the turnkey, "you are too bad, to make a poor unfortunate fellow pay his weight in gold, for a little straw and a few coals!"

"I'm a great mind to ask him four ducats," replied the turnkey, in a passion. "It is you who are playing the sharper, master Nychol, in trying to cheat the poor man out of the value of his body. Two ducats, indeed! You know well enough it will bring you twenty, undressed, from the first doctor or savant you meet."

"I never paid more than fifteen shillings for a body in my life," whined the executioner.

"That may be for the body of a miserable thief, or beastly Jew; but every one knows, that the body of Hans of Iceland will bring you whatever you choose to ask."

"What business is it of yours?" cried the hangman, in a rage. "I never interfere with your robbing your prisoners of their clothes and jewels, or your seasoning the soup with salt-water, or the various torments you inflict upon them to exact their money. No, I never will give two ducats."

"For less than two ducats, he shall have no straw nor fire," said the turnkey.

"For less than two ducats, you shall never have my body," added Hans.

The executioner hesitated for a moment, and then, stamping with vexation, he drew forth his leather purse, and opened it with reluctance. "I've no more time to chaffer with you," he said, "for I have a job to attend to now. Here," he con-

tinued, drawing out the ducats, "here, you cursed Iclander, I take your body at your own price, and that is more, I'll be bound, than the devil would give for your soul."

The brigand took the gold, and the turnkey held out his hand to receive it from him.

"Get me what I asked for, first, if you please, comrade," said Hans.

The turnkey went out, and soon returned with a bundle of straw and a pan of charcoal, which he placed beside the prisoner.

"That's right," said the brigand, giving him the money; "now I'll make a warm night of it. Stay, one word more; the regiment of Monckholm is quartered above here, is it not?"

"It is," replied the turnkey.

"Is the wind high?"

"Yes."

"From what quarter does it blow?"

"From the east, I think. Why do you ask?"

"No matter."

"Well, good night, comrade; to-morrow morning, early."

"Yes, to-morrow!" repeated the brigand, with a savage roar of laughter, which was drowned by the noise of the bolts and bars with which the turnkey secured the door.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BROTHERS.

LET us now pay a visit to another prison, which is also located beneath the quarters of the regiment of Monckholm, and which is just now tenanted by our old acquaintance, Turiaf Musdamon.

It may have seemed unnatural, that one so cunning, treacherous, and unprincipled as Musdamon, should have confessed his crimes before the tribunal with so much frankness, and have shielded his patron from blame with so much magnanimity; but a moment's reflection will suffice to show, that the part he played was in perfect keeping with his character. Never, perhaps, had he displayed greater address than he did, when he adopted the semblance of generosity and perfect good faith. The sudden and unexpected development of his atrocious plot had, for the moment, struck him with consternation; but the first shock over, he began to look about him, and his shrewdness soon admonished him, that he must at once abandon the pursuit of the victims he had so nearly run down, and devote his energies to save himself.

Two chances to extricate himself presented themselves for his choice. The first was, to throw the blame upon the chancellor, and plead that he had acted under his directions; the second, to assume the whole burden himself, exculpate the chancellor, and trust to him for his ultimate relief. Of these courses, a common villain would have selected the first; Musdamon chose the second.

The chancellor, *was chancellor*, he considered, and there was nothing in the papers which necessarily implicated him in the plot. Then the glances of intelligence which he exchanged with his master, confirmed him in his resolution, and he suffered himself to be condemned without uttering a word in his defence, confident that the Count d'Ahlefeldt would provide for his escape, less, perhaps, from gratitude, than from the necessity he would feel for his future services.

Free from apprehension, then, he paced the floor of his dungeon, waiting until the night should so far wear away, that his door might be set open without danger of discovery. By the light of the sepulchral lamp which had been left him, he examined with idle curiosity the form of this ancient prison, built by kings of old, and much he wondered at the square planked space in the centre of the floor of stone, which resounded to his tread, as if it covered some subterranean cavity. In the centre of the vault above, also, he observed an iron ring, from which hung the remnant of a cord, which he readily concluded had been used to raise the trap beneath. The time passed on, and he was beginning to weary of hearing the donjon clock strike the successive hours, as it echoed through the deserted courts of the fortress.

At length, a noise was heard without the door of his dungeon. His heart beat rapidly—the key was inserted in the lock, the massive bolts sprang back, the hinges creaked, the door flew open, and Musdamon's face was radiant with joy.

His visitor was a man in scarlet, who we have just seen in the dungeon of Hans of Iceland. He had under his arm a coil of hempen rope; and four halberdiers, with swords by their sides, and partizans in their hands, accompanied him.

Musdamon was still clad in his magisterial robes and periwig. His costume seemed to impress the scarlet functionary with respect; he bowed low, and said with some hesitation:

"Is our business with your worship?"

"Certainly! certainly!" replied Musdamon, whose expectations of release now

arose to certainty, as he marked the respectful deportment of the new comer.

"You are called Turiaf Musdamon?" continued the man in red, as he looked over a parchment which he took from his pocket.

"Exactly, my good friend! you are sent here by the grand-chancellor?"

"I am, your worship."

"I thought so! Do n't forget, when you return to him, to assure him of my lasting gratitude."

"Your gratitude?"

"Yes, my gratitude! For it will probably not be in my power to express my acknowledgments to him in person, very soon."

"Probably not," returned the other dryly.

"You speak as if you doubted my gratitude to his grace, my friend?" observed Musdamon.

"And by the cross of the repentant thief, your worship speaks as if his grace was doing you a great favor."

"Why, it is true, he does me no more than strict justice, though——"

"No more than strict justice! Well, this is the first time in the six-and-twenty years that I have followed my profession, that I ever heard that admission made. But come, seignior, we are wasting our time in talk, when we ought to be at work. Are you ready?"

"Quite ready," said Musdamon, stepping toward the door.

"Wait, wait a moment," said the man, as he laid down his coil of rope.

Musdamon stopped. "What is all that cord for?"

"I do not wonder you ask," replied the other, "for there is a great deal more than is necessary; but I thought at first I should have more work to do, and I provided accordingly."

"Well, make haste," said Musdamon.

"It seems to me that your worship is in a wonderful hurry; is there no request, no——"

"No, nothing except that you would make my acknowledgments to his grace, as I said before. But for God's sake, make haste; I'm in a hurry to be off, for I've a long journey before me."

"A long journey, indeed," replied the man, "if so you choose to call it; but your worship need not be afraid of the fatigue, for you'll make your journey without ever crossing the threshold of this room."

A cold chill ran through Musdamon's veins. "What mean you?" said he, faintly.

"What do you mean, yourself?" asked the other, in reply.

"Merciful Heaven! who are you?" faltered Musdamon, as the fatal truth, like a funeral torch, broke in upon his mind.

"I am the executioner."

The unhappy criminal trembled like an aspen leaf. "And do you not come here to aid me to escape?" he asked, with a faint voice, as the last gleam of hope deserted him.

"To escape! oh, yes! into the spirit-land!" replied the executioner, with a laugh, as he busied himself in arranging his cord; "and when you get there, I'll insure you against being retaken."

Musdamon threw himself upon his face on the floor. "Mercy!" he cried; "have pity on me! mercy! mercy!"

"Well! that is an odd request to make to me, too," observed the executioner, coolly, as he went on with his arrangements. "Do you take me for the king?"

The miserable man, still prostrate, dragged himself to the feet of the official, and embraced his knees, while the cell resounded with his entreaties, broken with sobs.

"Come, come," said the other, as he shook him off, "that's out of character; the black robe should never kneel to the red. Address your prayers to God and the saints, comrade, they can hear you, but I must not."

Musdamon covered his face with his hands. The hangman, standing upon tip-toe, passed one end of his cord through the ring in the vault, secured it by a double-knot, and then prepared a running noose in the other extremity, which reached the floor. "Now I'm ready," said he, to the condemned; "are you?"

"No!" cried Musdamon, springing to his feet; "no, this must not be! you are laboring under some dreadful mistake. The chancellor cannot be guilty of such baseness. Besides, I am too necessary to him; he could not have meant me. Let me escape! fear not that the chancellor will blame you."

"Did you not say," replied the executioner, "that you were Turiaf Musdamon?"

"The secretary hesitated a moment, and then exclaimed: "No! I am not Turiaf Musdamon; my real name is Turiaf Orugix."

"Orugix!" cried the hangman; "Orugix!"

He tore the periwig from the head of the condemned, and looked him intently in the face; an expression of stupid amazement overspread his countenance, and he exclaimed: "Is it possible! my brother!"

"Your brother!" repeated the secretary

with newly awakened hope, not unmixed with shame; "Are you?"

"Nychol Orugix, executioner of Drontheim, at your service, brother Turiaf."

"My brother, my own dear brother!" exclaimed the condemned, as he threw himself upon the hangman's neck, and wept aloud. His embrace, however, met with but a cold return; a slight embarrassment, a touch of sadness might for a moment have mingled with the stern and savage regard which the executioner threw upon the criminal, but they speedily passed away. It was like the tiger fondling with the elephant, when the monster's foot was already placed upon his panting breast.

"I am so happy, I am so rejoiced to see you, brother Nychol," added the secretary.

"The best I can say is, that I am *sorry* to see you, brother Turiaf."

Affecting not to hear this ill-omened speech, the condemned continued: "You have a wife and children, I suppose, dear brother; I shall be so glad to see my dear nephews and nieces——"

"The devil you will! you never thought of it before;" muttered the executioner between his teeth.

"I'll be a second father to them, for I am prosperous, brother; you must know I have great influence with the chancellor."

"You had, I know," replied the other, with a sinister expression; "at present, your influence with God and the saints, will stand you best instead——"

His newly awakened hope died away from the countenance of the secretary.

"Oh! Heaven!" he cried, "brother Nychol, what mean you? Surely I have nothing to fear from you. Recollect, Nychol, we played together when children; we are brothers."

"It is strange you never recollected it till now," replied the surly official.

"But do not tell me that I am to die by the hand of a brother!"

"It is all your own fault, Turiaf," said the other, doggedly; "had it not been for you, I should have been royal executioner at Copenhagen, instead of a poor provincial hangman. If you had not acted in bad faith to me, you would not have been obliged to undergo, at my hands, what seems so revolting to you—I should not have been at Drontheim, and some one else would have finished your business. But come, brother, there is no use of talking, you must die."

The condemned again threw himself at the feet of the executioner; he writhed in agony, and mingled with tears and groans,

his ineffectual supplications. "God have mercy on me! Holy saints, if saints there are, have pity on me! Nychol, dear Nychol, for our mother's sake, let me live!"

The executioner held out his warrant: "I cannot," he said, "my orders are peremptory."

"But that warrant is not intended for me, it names one Turiaf Musdamon; I am Turiaf Orugix."

"That will not do," said the other, shrugging his shoulders. "I know well enough it is intended for you; besides," he added coldly, "until now you never showed yourself a brother; you were Turiaf Musdamon to me, and Turiaf Musdamon, you must continue to be."

"But wait till to-morrow; I tell you it is all a mistake, the chancellor loves me, he could never have given this order for my execution. Wait but till to-morrow, all will be right; I shall be restored to power, and then any favor you may ask, I will procure for you."

"There is but one favor you can do me, Turiaf," replied the other. "I have already lost two executions, which I counted upon—those of Count Schumacker, and the viceroy's son; you and Hans of Iceland, are the only subjects I have left. Your execution, being nocturnal and secret, will bring me twelve gold ducats; now, the only favor I ask of you is, to submit, and let me perform my office without further trouble."

"Oh God!" exclaimed the condemned.

"Yes," he continued, "that will be the first and last favor you will ever have done me; and in return, I promise you an easy death: I'll hang you like a brother. Come, prepare!"

Musdamon sprang to his feet; his nostrils distended with rage; his lips turned livid, his teeth chattered, and his mouth foamed with despair.

"Satan!" he cried, "I saved this d'Ahlefeldt; I have embraced my brother, and they murder me. And must I die in the dark, in this infernal cell, where my voice cannot be heard when I proclaim their crimes, and shout my curses upon their heads? Is it for this that I have toiled and plotted? Wretch!" he continued, addressing his brother, "would you be a fraticide?"

"I am the executioner, and I must do my duty," replied the phlegmatic Nychol.

"You shall not!" roared the other, as, with flaming eyes, and every muscle strung by the fury of despair, he braced himself to the encounter; "No! I have lived like a serpent—my bite is venomous! I will

have life for life! I'll not perish tamely, like a trampled worm!"

So saying, he flew at his brother's throat, and strove to strangle him he had so lately half smothered with caresses. Rage and despair gave him strength, and the struggle which took place was appalling to behold, whether one regarded the demoniac fury of the one combatant, or the brute ferocity of the other.

The four halberdiers, who had hitherto remained passive spectators of this extraordinary scene, now came to the assistance of the executioner; Musdamon was forced to quit his hold. He dashed himself against the walls; he strove to penetrate them with his nails; he raged, shouted, and screamed aloud, as if he would pierce their rocky sides by his cries, until, exhausted by his vain and frantic efforts, he sank back, and the attendants proceeded quietly to disrobe him, in preparation for his execution.

At this moment a sealed packet dropped from his bosom.

"What is that?" asked the executioner.

A gleam of exultation, for a moment, lighted the eyes of the condemned.

"I had forgotten!" he exclaimed, "brother Nychol:" then added, in at one which seemed almost friendly, "these papers belong to the grand-chancellor; promise to deliver them to him, and you may work your will on me."

"If you will submit quietly I promise to do so," replied Nychol, "though you do not deserve it, for your unbrotherly treatment of me; but the chancellor shall have them, upon the word of an Orugix."

"Be sure that you deliver them to himself," said Musdamon, with a smile of peculiar meaning; "their contents will give him so much pleasure, that he will doubtless confer some favor upon you."

"Indeed, brother! I thank you; perhaps he will make me executioner royal! Now, that is kind of you; we'll part good friends. I forgive you for the throttling you gave me; forgive me for the hempen collar I must bestow upon you."

"The chancellor promised me another sort of collar than this!" said Musdamon.

The halberdiers had brought him, ready pinioned, to the centre of the cell, placing him under the ring, through which the rope was suspended; the executioner passed the noose around his neck, and motioning the halberdiers to step back, inquired:

"Turiaf, are you ready?"

"One moment! one moment longer, brother!" faltered the condemned, whose terror returned at the approach of death; do not pull the rope till I give the signal."

"I shall not pull it," replied the executioner quietly.

In a minute he again asked,

"Are you ready?"

"And must I die? one moment more!"

"Tutiaf, there is no use in talking; I can wait no longer!"

"One word, brother! do n't forget the packet to the chancellor!"

"Make yourself easy on that point. Are you ready?" he added, for the third time.

The wretched man had just opened his mouth, to plead for one moment's more delay, when the hangman stooped down and turned a brass button, which projected, almost imperceptibly, from the plank. The platform dropped from under the feet of the sufferer, and he disappeared in the vault beneath. The cord extended with a sudden twang, and vibrated rapidly with the struggles of the dying. Besides this, nothing was seen by those above except the square dark opening in the floor, through which came a strong draft of fresh air, and the distant sound of running water.

The halberdiers recoiled with horror; but the hangman, leaning over the abyss, seized the cord with his hands, and slid down thereby, until his feet rested upon the shoulders of the sufferer. Stretched to its utmost by this additional weight, the cord became stationary; a single stifled sob, proclaimed the departure of life from the body, and the hangman reascended to the dungeon.

"Farewell, brother!" he exclaimed, drawing a cutlass from his belt; "go, and feed the fishes of the gulf! The body to the waves, and the soul to the flames!"

He cut the tightened cord, the portion attached to the ring sprang spirally to the top of the vault; while, from the depths beneath was heard a sullen splash, as the waters received their ghastly burthen, and swept it onward to the gulf.

The hangman shut the trap and secured it; as he rose, he perceived that the room was filled with smoke.

"What is all this?" he demanded of the halberdiers.

They knew not. They opened the door of the cell, a suffocating smoke filled all the interior of the prison, and they were forced to make their escape through a secret passage; and when they reached the court-yard, a terrible spectacle met their view.

A dreadful conflagration wrapped the vast tower, which contained the prisons, and the quarters of the regiment of Monckholm. Fanned by the wind, which blew a

gale, the flames were bursting from every window, and had entirely mastered the lower portion of the building. A turnkey, who soon after joined them, having with difficulty made his escape, declared, that the fire had broken out in the dungeon of Hans of Iceland, who had been imprudently allowed straw and a fire; that the guards, who had been placed at his door, had perished by suffocation in their drunken slumber; and that the floors and staircases were already consumed.

The unhappy arquebussiers of Monckholm, were roused from their sleep by the roaring and crackling of the conflagration, only to find all means of escape cut off. With piercing shrieks and execrations, they fought and struggled their way to the windows; but these were narrow and lofty, while beneath was the flinty pavement of the court. Driven to desperation by the flames, some essayed the fatal leap, and were dashed to pieces; others escaped with broken limbs; but such was the terror and confusion of the mass, that even this resource was unavailable to many. Soon the inhabitants of the fortress were aroused, and came to their relief; vain were all attempts to check the progress of the flames. The scene became too horrible for description. Ladders were brought, but before one third of the doomed regiment had been rescued, the roof and floors fell in—one wild scream of agony arose, and scores of the brave garrison of Monckholm sank into a fiery tomb!

"What an unlucky devil I am," exclaimed Orugix, as he witnessed this awful calamity. "That cursed Hans of Iceland is doubtless burned to a cinder, and but a few hours ago, I gave him two golden ducats for his body."

In the morning, nothing was to be seen from the court-yard, but the blackened wall of the tower, which fortunately was isolated from the rest of the fortress. Within, was a mass of ruins mingled with human remains, over which the lambent flames still crept like devouring serpents, while for leagues around, a sickening effluvia bore testimony to the sad catastrophe. When after a time the debris had cooled, and the interior of the tower was examined, apart from the principal collection of bones was found, in what appeared to be the ruins of a dungeon, the remains of a man of low stature; near him were broken chains, his skull was large, and of a hideous conformation, while beside him was the fragment of another skull, for which no body could be found.

So perished Hans of Iceland, and with

him, the greater part of what remained of the gallant arquebussiers of Monckholm.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MUSDAMON'S LEGACY TO THE CHANCELLOR.

PALE and agitated, the Chancellor d'Ahlefeldt traversed the saloon of the palace of government of Drontheim. In his hand he crushed a packet of open letters, while, from time to time, deeply muttered execrations betrayed the storm which raged within. At the lower end of the room, stood Nychol Orugix, in an attitude of profound respect, clad in his robes of scarlet, and carrying his hat of felt in his hand.

"Yes, you richly have earned your reward, Musdamon," muttered the chancellor, between his teeth.

The executioner returned a timid bow; "I hope, that your grace is satisfied," he said.

"What do you want here?" said the chancellor, harshly.

The executioner summoned all his courage, and replied: "The post of executioner-royal, if your grace does not think it too much, for the pleasant news I have brought you."

The chancellor called the halberdiers, who were posted at the door. "Turn this fellow out, he annoys me."

The halberdiers seized the luckless Nychol, who, stupefied with amazement, would still hazard another word.

"Seignior," he began.

"Begone, wretch! I deprive you of your present office," said the chancellor, shutting the door with violence.

He then returned to his letters, which he perused until almost beside himself with rage. They were the letters of his wife, to Musdamon, which the latter had carefully preserved from the earliest date of their criminal intimacy. By them he found that Ulrica was not his daughter, that it was by no means certain that the Frederic, he mourned, had been his son. That the wife of his bosom was unfaithful, and that the slave he despised, had defiled his bed. The pride which had impelled the wretched count to so many, and such damning crimes, was now his punishment; if he looked back, it was upon dishonor and disgrace—forward, was nothing but a lonely path to the grave.

But, he would see once more the faithless woman who had betrayed him. Shaking the packet he held in his hand, as if it had been a thunderbolt, he traversed the

long corridors, until he reached the door of her apartment: he entered.

The miserable mother had been suddenly apprised of the fearful death of Frederic, and her reason had fled forever.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CONCLUSION.

A FORTNIGHT had passed away, and the old women of Drontheim had almost ceased to talk of that fearful night when Hans of Iceland, enveloped in flames, laughed and shouted over the destruction of the regiment of Monckholm; when Ordoner, whose absence already seemed an age to Ethel, made his appearance at the donjon of the Lion of Slæsvig, accompanied by General Levin de Knud and the good chaplain, Athanasius Munder.

They found Schumacker and his daughter in the garden; the newly married pair could have rushed into each other's arms, but they contented themselves with a look, which spoke volumes. Schumacker grasped Ordoner by the hand, and saluted his companions with unwonted benevolence of manner.

"Young man," said the captive, "Heaven be thanked that I see you once more."

"Seignior," replied Ordoner, "I have been to see my father, at Berghen. I now return to my father, at Monckholm."

"What mean you?" inquired the captive.

"I have come to ask the hand of your daughter."

"Of my daughter?" cried the old man, turning to Ethel, who stood blushing in silent confusion.

"Yes, my lord; I am ready to consecrate my life to her happiness. Let Ethel be my wife."

Schumacker's brow became overcast.

"You are a noble and worthy youth," he replied; "your father has done me much wrong; but, for your sake, I forgive him. Still there is an obstacle——"

"What obstacle, my lord?" exclaimed Ordoner, anxiously.

"You love my daughter; but, are you sure she loves you?"

The lovers exchanged a look of mute surprise.

"Yes, my young friend," continued Schumacker, "there is an obstacle. I should rejoice to call you son; but my daughter does not love you. She long ago declared to me her aversion to you, and since your departure, when I have attempted to speak of you, she has been si-

lent and ill-pleased. I am sorry ; but you must renounce your love for her. Do not despair, for love, as well as hatred, may be cured."

"My lord !" exclaimed Ordoner.

"My father !" cried Ethel at the same time.

"Be satisfied, my daughter. Much as I desired this match, I have given it up. The last few weeks have wrought a change in me. I would have forced you to marry Ordoner ; but your affections shall not be constrained. You are free to——"

"Hardly," said Athunasius Munder ! "she is not free."

"You deceive yourself, my noble father," added Ethel, taking courage ; "I do not hate Ordoner."

"How !" cried the old man.

"I am," began Ethel—she hesitated. Ordoner took her by the hand, and both knelt before the old man.

"She is my wife ! Father, forgive and bless us."

Schumacker, astonished in his turn, pronounced his benediction. "I have cursed so often and so long," he added, "that I am glad of an opportunity to bless without inquiring all the particulars. But tell me, pray——"

All was explained, and the stern old man melted into tears of gratitude and love.

"I thought I was wise," he said, "but I am only old—I have not yet learned to comprehend the heart of a young girl."

"And I am Madame Ordoner Guldenlew," cried Ethel, with childish glee.

"Ordoner," said the old captive, "you are of a nobler nature than I ; for in my days of pride and prosperity, I could never have stooped to marry the daughter of a proscribed and disgraced prisoner."

The general took the prisoner's hand. "Count," he said, "speak not thus. The king has already reversed your sentence. Your pardon and restoration are the dowry of the Countess Danneskiold."

"His pardon !" cried Ethel.

"The Countess Danneskiold !" exclaimed Schumacker.

"Yes, count," continued the general. "Your honors and your estates are all restored."

"And to whom do I owe all this ?"

"To General Levin de Knud," replied Ordoner.

"Levin de Knud !" exclaimed Schumacker.

"Do you remember the governor ? did I not tell you he was the best of men ?"

"Why did he not bring me the news himself, that I might thank him ? Where is he ?"

"Here !" cried Ordoner, placing his hand upon the shoulder of the general.

The recognition of the two old men was touching in the extreme. Schumacker's heart expanded, till it filled the generous space it had originally occupied. When he parted with Hans of Iceland, he had ceased to hate men ; in Ordoner and Levin he had learned to love them.

The sombre nuptials which had taken place in the cell of the condemned, were celebrated with unrivalled splendor in the halls of royalty, and fortune at last smiled on those, who had already learned to smile at death.

Athunasius Munder received the pardon of those for whom he had plead, and Ordoner, in addition, obtained that of his old comrades. Kennybol, Jonas and Norbith, who were sent home with the peaceful tidings, that the king had released the miners from their hated tutelage.

Schumacker did not long survive the union of Ordoner and Ethel. In the same year, of 1697, after having attained to the age of three-score and ten, he was taken from his children, as if to remind them that no earthly happiness is perfect. He was buried in the church of Wen, a domain which appertained to the family of his wife ; and his monument, to this day, preserves the memory of the titles of which he was so long deprived. From the union of Ordoner and Ethel, sprung the race of the counts of Danneskiold.

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